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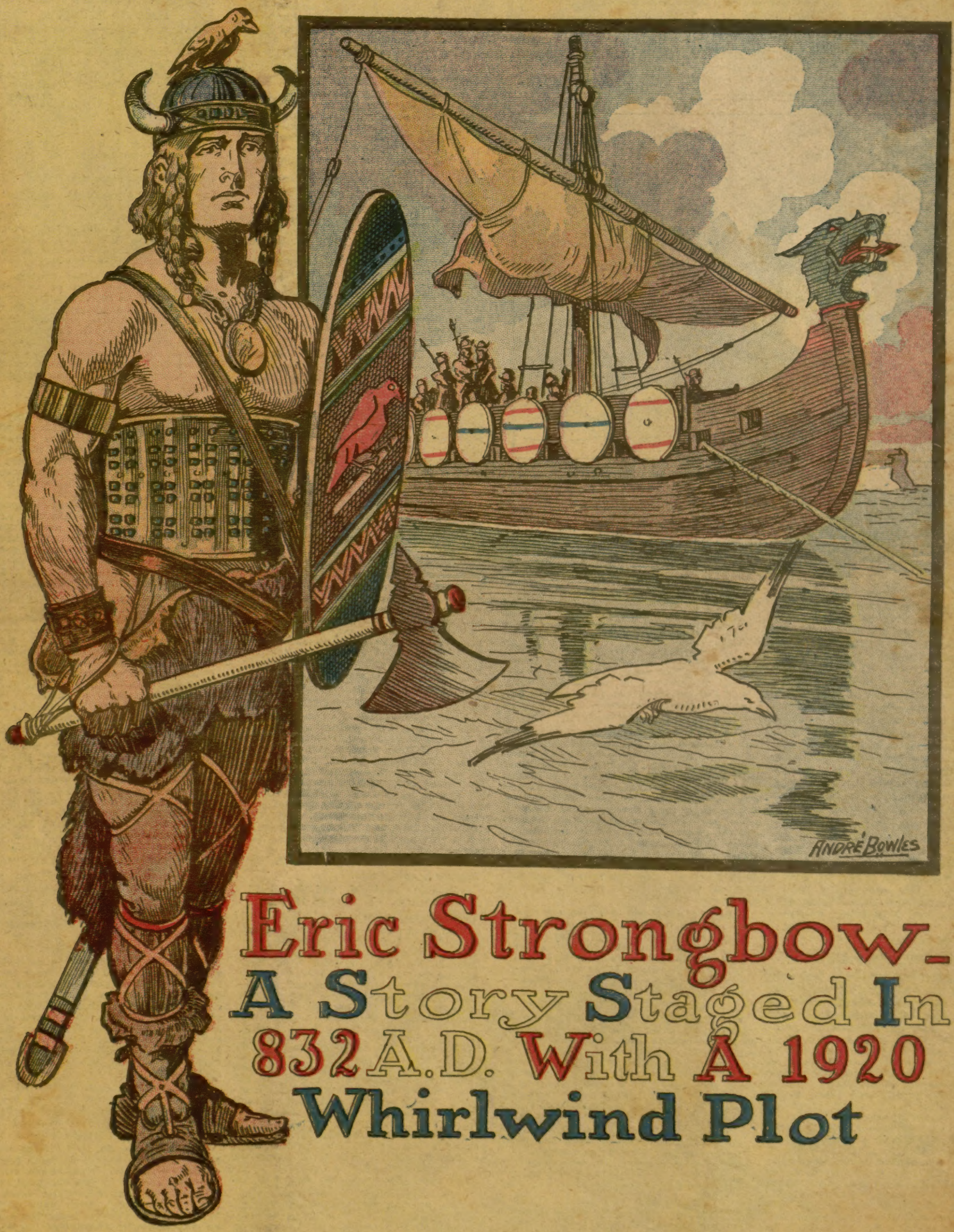

Eric Strongbow—A Story Staged In 832 A.D. With A 1920 Whirlwind Plot

CHICAGO LEDGER

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Report of the Great Meeting of Ledger Characters

By The Editor

THE Editor was most fortunate in being able to attend this remarkable meeting, which is held once a year by the Amalgamated Protective Society of Ledger Fiction Characters. The object of the society is, as its name implies, chiefly, protection for a peculiar class of workers—fiction characters—and it represents probably the most unique labor union in the world. Many views were expressed and much discontent was shown in the pressure methods being used upon story-characters by authors, aided and abetted, in some slight degree, by editors themselves.

A goodly number of characters, amounting to three hundred and eighty-six, were present when the meeting was called together at 8:15 by the newly elected president, Eric Strongbow. Mr. Strongbow was clad in the costume of a Viking of 1,100 years ago, with tunic, golden armbands, and leather helmet tipped with horns.

PRESIDENT STRONGBOW.

Fellow Ledger characters, I feel duly honored by your election of me today, to preside over this august body of craftsmen, the Amalgamated Ledger Characters. I am sure that in the coming year we shall manage, by close union with each other, to mitigate to some extent the evils imposed upon us by thoughtless authors, helped as they are by the Editor of the Ledger, who, I see, is sitting quietly over there in the corner watching this meeting. (Pause.) For myself I can truly say that the grievances which we suffer are manifold. That a perfectly good character, one who could function admirably in a story staged in the present age, should be forced to take the active part in a setting laid so far back as 832 A. D. is preposterous. True, I have no objections to the vehicle itself—the story which Mr. Kofoed, the author, provided me. It is a most desirable one for my er—ah—talents. But I do object to functioning in an age and in a locale so far removed from that which is given to the rest of you. This is but one of many justifiable complaints which we shall hear tonight, I am sure. Again let me thank you for the honor you have done me in electing me, and to assure you that until all of us ascend into Valhalla, we shall strive for the betterment of the class, including those thousands of unfortunates yet to be born in authors' typewriters. May we hear from others? I thank you.

(Applause of fifteen solid minutes followed. After several cessations and outbursts, quiet finally followed. Paul Wentworth, of Kings of Dirk and Cutlass, took the floor, clad in a pirate's gaudy costume.)

PAUL WENTWORTH.

I am quite sure we will all agree with our president, Mr. Strongbow. I for one have been handled much as he has, altho not quite so badly, I admit. I functioned thru a great many installments of Kings of Dirk and Cutlass, working out my destiny back in the year 1677 or so. Worse than that, I was forced to be a slave for a number of chapters, enduring the greatest of hardships, and finally being forced—forced, gentlemen—to become a pirate. I think that some law should be passed preventing authors from forcing characters into occupations that are of a criminal nature. This is all I have to say.

(As he sat down, a character clad in a broad-felt hat, chaps and flannel shirt, jumped to his feet on one side of the hall, simultaneously with the rise of a bitter-faced man clad in a convict suit on the other side. President Strongbow handled the situation capably.)

PRESIDENT STRONGBOW.

We have before us, clamoring to be heard, both Wolf Wellington—he pointed at the striped-suit man—of The Desert's Web, and Curly Flandrau of Crooked Trails and Straight. I have talked with both of these gentlemen. Each was forced, as was Mr. Wentworth, to be a criminal. This is an injustice. Have I stated your grievances, gentlemen?

(Both characters, satisfied, sat down. A wild-looking man dressed in the costume of a Government light-house tender arose. It was evident to the Editor that he was Crazy Dick of The Extra Ounce.)

CRAZY DICK.

I think the gentlemen have nothing to complain about. Mr. Wellington's character was cleared at the end of the story, showing that he was innocent of the crime for which he was sent to the penitentiary. Mr. Flandrau, at this present sitting, is doing so much that is good and worthy in his story that he has more than atoned for the folly of his earlier chapters. I am the one to protest, gentlemen. If ever damnable outrage was perpetrated on a character, it was done on me. I was made an insane character. Can you beat it? I have nursed my grievance for days—and am as bitter as ever. That is all.

(At this juncture an elderly benevolent gentleman, sitting next to the Editor, turned to him. The Editor remembered him at once. It was Jacob Crane of the same story, The Extra Ounce. "That bird kept me on pins and needles for three thousand words," he grunted. "I'm thinking that I'm the character to do the kicking instead of him—locked up with him on a lonely island. And he protests! Hmph!" He was interrupted by the rising of a most disreputable character, his toes peeping from his boots, his face unshaven, his nose a brilliant red, a veritable hobo. He began to speak, giving his name as Hugo Flauvette.)

HUGO FLAUVETTE.

I am here tonight——.

PRESIDENT STRONGBOW.

I am sorry, Mr. Flauvette. Characters in the Editor's Talks are not allowed in the society for fiction characters. I met "That Strange Tramp," who comes in the Talks at times, at the outer door tonight. He questioned me about this point, and I had to tell him, as I am telling you, that characters by the Editor are barred.

HUGO FLAUVETTE.

I'll lick any man here that tries to——

PRESIDENT STRONGBOW (calmly).

Is there a detective present?

(From the rear of the hall, a tall, broad-shouldered man, with a lean, keen face—the face of a hound—was coming down the aisle, evidently late, to the meeting. From some one close to the Editor came the call: "Here's Detective Josman Sheffield!")

PRESIDENT STRONGBOW.

Mr. Sheffield, will you kindly eject this character from the hall?

(Mr. Josman Sheffield proved to be a man of action, instead of words. In a trice he was up on the platform; he had seized Hugo Flauvette by the nape of the neck, and before the eyes of the onlookers had rushed him down the aisle and thrust him out into the lobby. He locked the door with a bang, clicked the key, and strolled back up the aisle, brushing off his sleeve nonchalantly with his handkerchief. He paused at his seat, and spoke in a clear, masterful tone to the president.)

JOSMAN SHEFFIELD.

I am here tonight, President Strongbow, merely to form a special protection branch of our honored society—the branch of fiction detectives. I have been very busy preparing for my work in my forthcoming story, shortly to appear, and I am more than glad to have been of service to you in ejecting any and all disturbers such as old Hugo Flauvette. (He looked about him.) Is Reginald Brett present?

(A keen-looking Englishman seated across the hall arose.)

REGINALD BRETT.

Ah, there, Sheffield. Glad you got here. I see we lead off together on a couple of mystery stories in the Great Mystery Number. I hear you're going to do a regular brain-teaser in finger-prints. I'm doing murder—staged in London. (He looked up.) If President Strongbow will excuse us, we will withdraw to the ante-room to frame up the special rules regarding fiction detectives. As characters who have not yet appeared in the pages, this should be permissable. May we——?

PRESIDENT STRONGBOW.

Excused, gentlemen.

(Josman Sheffield and Reginald Brett both withdrew from the hall.)

Have we any committees to hear from?

(An aged darky with white woolly hair arose from the corner of the room. A quietness filled the vast space. From all around him, the Editor could hear whispered comments. "There's Pete Paggly." Some one leaned over to him and whispered: "That's the hardest and most over-worked character in fiction.)

PETE PAGGLY.

Gentlemen, the Ledger's new humor series has greatly weakened and debilitated me. Mr. Calloway, the author, has literally worked me with a whip in his hand. Worse, the climate of Tela, Honduras, where I am stationed in my stories, is most exhausting. At the behest of Mr. Nicktacker, of Mr. Nicktacker Saves the Gas, and Mr. Titwilliger, of Titwilliger's Mathematical Clock, we are forming a branch of humorous story characters. I will have Mr. Nicktacker read the resolution agreed upon.

(Mr. Nicktacker, badly bandaged, arose, holding the resolution in his one good hand. Mr. Titwilliger, wild-eyed from his tussles with his mathematical clock, also stood up, evidently thinking he must show himself.)

MR. NICKTACKER (Reading).

"Resolved, That humorous characters function in not more than one story."

(Here a man clad in the uniform of a sailor popped up. It proved to be Rafferty, of a Gift for the Captain.)

RAFFERTY.

I belong to this humor character society, all right, but I'm not strong for resolutions. I went to Merlin Moore Taylor, the author of my story, who was just about to do another centering about me, and I told him if he tried anything like that, I'd lie down in the middle of the yarn and quit. Strike! That's my theory. Strike in the middle of the yarn! Taylor quit mighty quick when I laid down the law to him. (Hitching up his sailor trousers, Mr. Rafferty sat down.)

(A sweet-looking girl arose in the front row. She proved to be Orris O'Donoghue, of the Mad Hatter.)

MISS O'DONOGHUE.

Perhaps the ladies may be heard from now. We have few grievances to relate, I think. As a rule, authors try their best to paint us very beautiful, to give us nice things to wear, to make our parts as light as possible. I feel, however, that they strive too hard to give us rare and bizarre names. Take "Orris" for instance. I like the old-fashioned ones. (She seated herself.)

(Another girl arose. She was Mary Alice Littlepage, of Trouble Enough.)

MISS LITTLEPAGE.

I cannot make the same complaint for myself, but I am heartily in accord with Miss O'Donoghue. It was but a freak of chance that the author who wrote my story named me Mary Alice instead of Lavinia Clementina. I shudder yet when I think of it. (She sat down.)

(There was a tense silence. A pounding on the door of the hall proved to be an interruption. Somebody went and opened it. Andre Bowles was outside. He was quickly informed that the Ledger characters—not the Ledger artists!—were meeting here, and was induced finally to leave. A young man arose. He was John Carter, of the Valley of Sleeping Slaves.)

JOHN CARTER.

I am not dissatisfied with my lot, strange to relate. Mr. Rosseau used me to work in the lead in the Valley of Sleeping Slaves, and when that story, hot as the climate of Africa, was finished, Hazel Goodwin Keeler borrowed me to assist Josman Sheffield in The Riddle of the Flying Hands. Some people would have considered themselves overworked, but I feel that this experience is what makes the perfect fiction character. From a tropic adventurer to assistant to a detective working on a mental problem in criminology is quite a range of parts to play. Well, I am glad of the experience. (He sat down.)

(A faded character, featureless, colorless, thin and scrawny and aged, arose. No one could catch his words. Cries of "Louder! Louder!" came from around the hall. With much effort, the character made himself understood as one Andrew Courtney, of Courtney's Strange Will or a Woman's Faith, by Emma Howard Wight, which appeared in the Ledger September 7th, 1912, eight years ago.)

MR. COURTNEY.

(Mr. Courtney's words were inaudible. It appeared that he was trying to put a motion thru to allow old characters of years back to reappear. But the effort to speak was hopeless, he was so far gone. Suddenly he collapsed. Dr. Von Schwerin of the Valley of Sleeping Slaves rushed to his side and felt his pulse. The physician arose.)

DR. VON SCHWERIN.

This poor old character can never function again. He has ceased to be.

(A cloth was laid over the remains, and the meeting continued. Dr. Hedric Hallam, of Thin Ice, took the floor.)

DR. HALLAM.

Seeing Dr. Von Schwerin actively engaged over there, I am inclined to state that a recent resume of stories in the Ledger makes the doctors' profession show forth too villainous. Take myself, made a swift, clever, bold villain in Thin Ice. Take poor Von Schwerin, made a villain in Sleeping Slaves. Take Dr. Eleazor of the Beast Maker, a villain par excellence. Why the medical profession, I ask?

(A dark-skinned, dark-eyed man arose, of undoubted Spanish origin. He was recognized at once as being the villain in Sleeping Slaves.)

DON EMILIO.

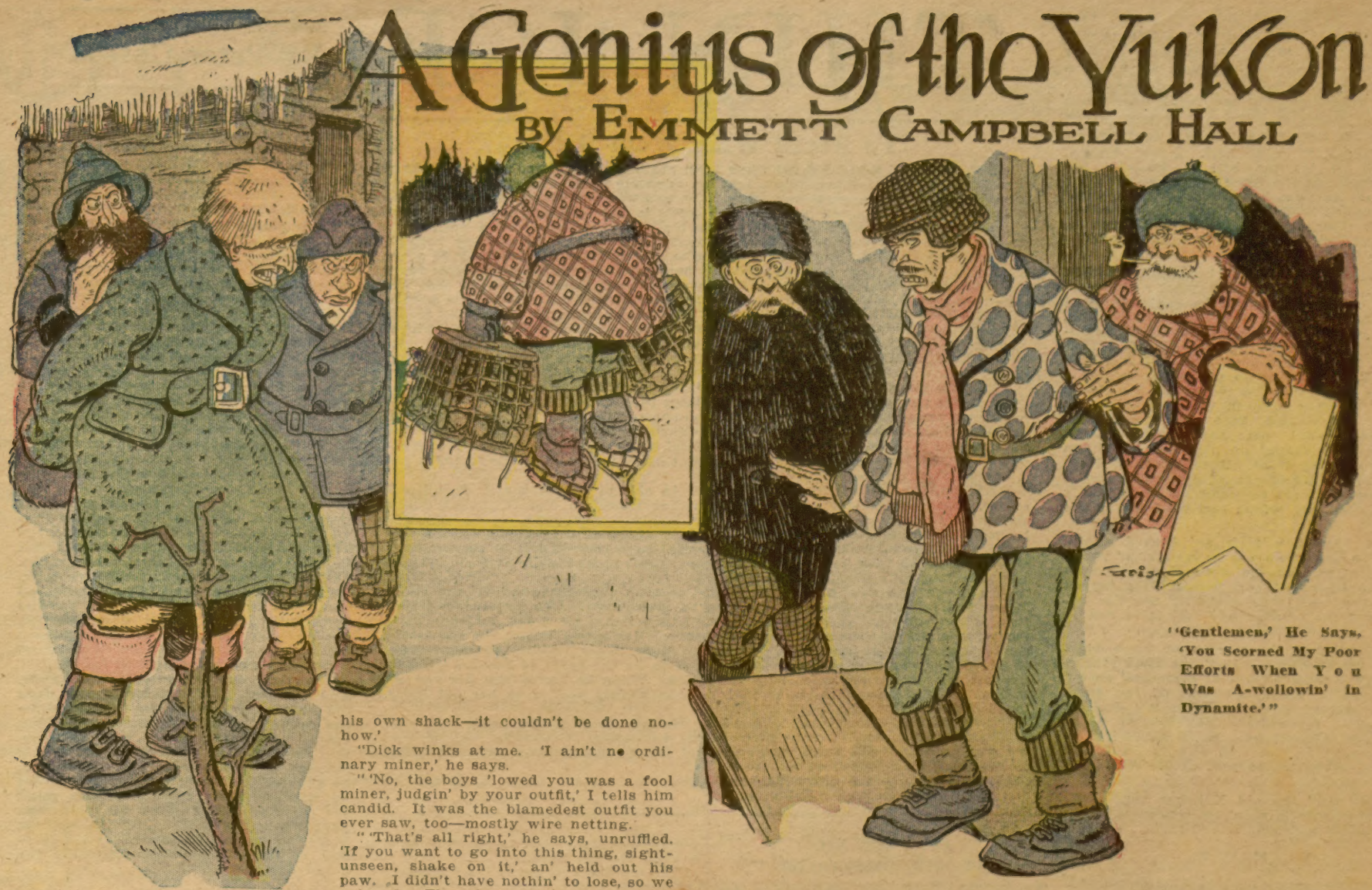
The thing to do is to form various societies of villains, heroes, heroines, comic characters, Westerners, etc., all banded together in the one great union. Then let authors negotiate, when they need a character, with each separate branch of the society. Poor Von Schwerin was made to partake of the villainy in Sleeping Slaves, whereas I was really the guilty one.

(Suddenly a beast-like figure, resembling a gorilla, arose. Its ivory fangs glistened, its red lips were drawn back, its long hairy arms

(Continued on Page 16.)

A Genius of the Yukon

BY EMMETT CAMPBELL HALL



"Gentlemen,' He Says, 'You Scorned My Poor Efforts When You Was A-wollowin' in Dynamite.'"

"THERE ain't no use in talkin'," the old Yukoner remarked, when the deep-water sailor had finished his account of the man who had trained all the monkeys of a South Sea island to gather all the nuts under cover of darkness, thereby enabling the ingenious one to corner the market and wax rich, locally, only in the end to have his cinch exploded by a dusky-skinned and soft-eyed maiden—"It don't make no difference how smart a chap is, it's all up with him soon as he gets to foolin' round with a female girl, an' the younger an' all that she is, the harder he's goin' to fall. Which remarks has particular reference to Dynamite Dick, which was the sharpest musher that ever hit the Dawson trail."

The old man leaned back in his chair and watched the smoke from his pipe as it drifted into the heat-draught from the stove, and whirled suddenly upward.

"These here incidents took place before all you flatboat fellows made the old Yukon look like the Grand canal. That winter there wasn't more than sixty men on the upper river, an' one female girl. Pretty late—just made it in time, Dick hits camp.

"I wasn't in just what you'd call prime high favor in that camp, some folks havin' said, a whole lot mean an' onery, that there'd been too many aces left in a deck after I got thru a game, and the only reason I was a-stayin' on there was that I couldn't get away. Dick hadn't been there long before he comes 'round to my shack one night. He didn't waste no words in no prolog, but comes right to the point.

"'How's the supply of dynamite in this here camp?' he asks. I didn't just catch his drift, but I answered:

"'Well,' I says, 'it's kinder scarce. Most of the men is got enough to last thru 'till spring, if they're sparin' of it.'

"'Huh! If they didn't have none, they'd pay pretty good prices for blastin', wouldn't they?' he says, sorter insinuatin' like.

"'You bet they would,' I agrees; 'that stuff is worth pretty near a million dollars in dust to this here camp.' You fellows build a fire on the ground to thaw your gravel, but in them days we'd undercut a bank, put in a light charge of dynamite, an' break it up that way. I begin to see his drift now, an' so remarks:

"'That stuff is scattered thru the whole camp—each fellow has got his in his own shack—it couldn't be done nohow.'

"Dick winks at me. 'I ain't no ordinary miner,' he says.

"'No, the boys 'lowed you was a fool miner, judgin' by your outfit,' I tells him candid. It was the blamedest outfit you ever saw, too—mostly wire netting.

"'That's all right,' he says, unruffled. 'If you want to go into this thing, sight-unseen, shake on it,' an' held out his paw. I didn't have nothin' to lose, so we gripped. Then he set over closer, an' unfolded his scheme.

"Well, for smartness I'll back that musher against anything that ever happened, bar none. We set up 'till what ought to have been mornin', if mornin's had been comin' in that region at that season, and fixed up the whole program. After that we whirled in making rat traps out of that wire netting of his, but workin' cautious, so as not to let any of the camp on to it. Dick gives it out that he is inventin' a new kind of explosive, made mostly of pine bark. This gives me a good excuse to go off into the woods every day. It ain't bark I'm after tho. It is to look after those traps we'd made and set to catch them big woods-rats. It wasn't long before we had about 2,000 of them.

"You fellows know how daffy a rat is after dynamite—blessed if they would gnaw into a bank vault to get to it after havin' tasted it once. Well, Dick started in to tame and train them rats—an' he bein' an animal trainer at one time he didn't have no trouble at all—and soon as he got them fairly trained and tamed, so they'd come back to our shack all right, we'd let them out at night, havin' first give each one a little lump of dynamite—just a taste. Then off they'd go, an' come back all stuffed up. In a few days some of the men began to talk about how the rats was eatin' their blastin' stuff, an' they tried to catch them every way, but Dick had taught them rats what a trap was an' it wasn't any use. It was a month maybe till the camp woke up to the fact that there wasn't no dynamite for blastin', and that the trail was closed 'till spring. They was most wild—a whole winter with no work done would mean a terrible loss, and they came to Dick to know if he had done anything with his fool pine bark. Dick swelled up his chest.

"'Gentlemen,' he says, 'you scorned my poor efforts when you was a-wollowin' in dynamite, but now you come to me for a crumb of my pine bark! Yes, genius has triumphed!' he says, and then turns to me.

"'Hang out the sign, Bill,' he orders, an' I got the board we'd got ready an' hung it up. It said:

RAWLINS & CARTER
Blastin' Contractors.
Blasts $50. No Explosives Sold.

"IT LIKE to have killed them fellers, but there wasn't nothin' else for them to do an' they had to come up with the dust. We shore did take in the nuggets.

"The way we worked was like this: Every night we'd take as many rats as we wanted to make blasts the next day, an' soak their tails in a mixture of sulphur, lard an' black powder, to make fuses. Then we'd go 'round to the various diggin's with our rats in a sack, make the men stand off so they couldn't see what we'd done, light the tip of a tail, an' head the rat into a hole which had been bored into the bank. With that sputterin' behind him, he'd go as far as he could, an' by that time the fuse would have burned up, an' the old rat, bein' nothin' but a chunk of animated dynamite, would blow up fine. Never did see such good blasts.

"Everything was goin' lovely 'till Dick got stuck on that young female girl, already befo' mentioned, as the lawyer said. I begged him to let it alone 'till spring, anyhow, but he wouldn't listen to no reason. Every man in camp was after her, an' it tickled Dick to see that she seemed to prefer him to any of the rest of the bunch. It takes a real smart chap to be a plumb fool, an' Dick was smart, all right. But he couldn't see that that little blue-eyed girl had it doped out easy that a man doin' all the blastin' for a camp at $50 per blast was a sucker with gold scales, an' a whole lot more worth ropin' than them that was doin' the payin'. I pleaded, but it wasn't no use, an' in pretty near no time they had it all fixed up, an' Dick, wishin' to show off, has the hitch pulled off in the big bunk-house, so's all the camp can come.

"I didn't go—I felt too blue. I knowed the whole cinch was busted, an' I went mopin' off an' set down under the lee of a bank. I could see two or three sleds drawin' up in front of mine an' Dick's

"Then All of a Sudden There Was a Kind of a Dull Roar That Knocked Me Flat on My Back, and Me a Half a Mile Away From—No, Not the Shack, but a Big Hole in the Ground Where the Shack Had Been."

shack, an knowed they was haulin' that female girl's fixin's over. I felt so discouraged I didn't hardly care if they found our rats—which was all up in a secret loft we had fixed up. I was a-settin' there smokin' mournful like, when all of a sudden I thought of that cat! It was the only cat in all that country, an' belonged to that girl. I had begged Dick to let me kill it, knowin' the danger, but she liked the beast, an' Dick would as soon have thought of shootin' an angel. An' now I knowed for certain that they had packed it over to the shack—an' near a thousand dynamite rats in the loft!

"I set there, hardly breathin', watchin' that shack for 15 minutes. The people that had brought the girl's stuff had gone, an' there wasn't nobody near it, an' there wasn't goin' to be, if 'somebody' meant me. Then, all of a sudden there was a kind of a dull roar that knocked me flat on my back, an' me a half mile away from—no, not the shack, but the big hole in the ground where the shack had been. It was simple enough—that cat had caught a rat, probably jumped on him and flung him against the floor. Just think of it—a thousand $50 blasts all gone up at once, along with all the dust we had already collected, an' which had been hid in the floor.

"I heaved a sigh an' looked about. There wasn't no use in me stayin' round that camp now—an' a fine dog-team with what looked like a fine outfit strapped on the sled, was standing not far off, where the musher had left it to run to see what the bust-up had been.

"I cracked the whip over them dogs, an' we was just hittin' the high places, when I caught sight of somethin' sorter untanglin' itself 'longside of the trail, an', gents, try to picture my feelin's when I recognized that blamed cat—hardly even singed. No, I didn't kill it. I caught it and tied a note on it for Dick, which same just said: 'Wish you both luck.'

"No sir," the old Yukoner concluded: "there shore is goin' to be trouble when a female girl gets mixed in!"

* * *

PRIDE

The nearest I got to the front in France
Was bakin' the army bread at Tours;
With a baker's apron over my pants,
Say, I was a hero-soldier, sure.
I done a year in the S. O. S.
An' men from the front they held the view
That I was a zero mark; I guess
That I was inclined to think so, too.

Over in France, I was just a worm
To the boys who came
I used to feel that I oughta squirm
Outa their sight to some hole of mine;
But now I'm home, an' my sleeve is bright
With two gold stripes, an' they sure look gay
Compared to the silver ones, all right,
Of guys who never left U. S. A.

Say, when you've been for a year or so
Where all you get is the glassy eye,
It sure is bully, believe me, bo,
To have it over some other guy.
My chest swells up, an' my shoulders square,
Whenever these silver-stripers pass,
For the service chevrons from Over There
Are Class, here, buddy—you get me?—Class!

—LIFE.

THIN ICE

By Peter Cotton

To Recall What Went Before

DR. HEDRIC HALLAM, who has been practicing medicine in the northern part of the State of Washington, left his clientele there because of a mistake he had made in filling a prescription. He was unfortunate in the events that followed—he was cheated in a game of cards at Portland and put off the train at Eugene because somebody had stolen his purse and ticket. In Eugene he took a room at a mediocre boarding house and that same evening invited, and entertained in his lodgings a man who resembled him physically to a remarkable degree. The stranger died of heart failure while in Hallam's room and the doctor effected a change of garments and identification so that the dead man would be mistaken for him. Then he assumed the name of his double,

HENRY HAMILTON, and taking the letters, photographs and money which belonged to Hamilton, he set out for the other's home town, Rock Springs. Among the photographs was a picture of Hamilton's sweetheart,

NANCY MAYNARD, who appeared to be an attractive and spirited young girl.

Testing his ability to impersonate Henry Hamilton by going first to Pocotello where an acquaintance cashed a check for him, Hallam met with a difficulty at once—he was accepted as Hamilton without question but accused at once of an assault to murder, which Hamilton was thought to have made upon a man called Larson. Thru a Portland acquaintance,

POWERS, Hallam proved an alibi—that he had been in Portland the night it was alleged the assault took place.

LYONS, the lawyer of Rock Springs, in charge of the senior Hamilton's estate, came to Pocotello upon hearing that Hamilton had re-appeared and thru him, the impostor received a fairly accurate conception of the situation he would have to face in Rock Springs. Cleared of the charge Larson had made, thru Lyons' good offices, Hallam considered himself out of danger until Powers made an insinuation as to the remarkable resemblance between Hallam and "the man who died in Eugene."

In Rock Springs the townspeople seemed friendly enough, especially Lyons and his wife, who took Hallam to their home. The latter found that part of his heritage as Henry Hamilton was a house on a hill secluded from the rest of the village, and here he chose to live alone except for his horse, Satan, and Fox, his dog. He received a letter from Fowers asking a loan of $500. Hallam sent the sum, knowing it to be the price of Powers' silence. He had not yet encountered Nancy Maynard. When he finally met her she did not, as he had feared, discover that he was merely posing as her old lover. But her father,

PAP MAYNARD, seemed to consider Hallam as an enemy, and

GILMORE, a town loafer, shared this animosity. Gradually Hallam won his way into Nancy's heart and he asked her to marry him. She consented, thinking he was Hamilton.

This story started in No. 25, the Ledger for June 19. Back copies may be had from our agents or newsdealers.

CHAPTER XII.

AT THE CROSSROADS.

DR. HALLAM was really in a distressed state of mind. Every man is who finds himslf betwixt love and some equally powerful influence. Caution warned him to go away and love held him back. Love having the nine points in its favor—that of possession—prevailed for the time being at least.

Disturbed by conflicting feelings, he watched Nancy until she rode out of sight. When he thought that she had time to reach her home, he turned his horse in the direction of Rock Springs. He had not been there for several days. Going to the postoffice, he found there another letter from Powers—another request for money. It was for an increased sum—for five thousand dollars. As Dr. Hallam read the insolent, insinuating appeal his cheeks flamed with anger. He decided to force Powers out into the open, if it was possible. Powers asked for a telegraphic reply. Dr. Hallam wired him one word—"No."

As he returned thru the town under the critical scrutiny of its citizens, some feeling within seemed to whisper that he had loosed a new agency for mischief; that instead of being squelched, Powers would be incited to open activity. He preferred even that to veiled threats. As he rode home the dangers which were increasing occupied his mind exclusively. Being engrossed by them, and by the letter he had received from Powers, he was unprepared for the grim figure standing beside his doorway, muscular and erect. Controlling his surprise, he peered intently thru the lowering dusk and recognized Pap Maynard. Instantly his spirit hardened to resistance of all opposing influences. So great was his astonishment, he forgot for the moment the picture of Nancy upon the little table.

It was that picture Maynard had come for.

Dr. Hallam politely invited him into the house and proffered him a chair. Then he noticed that Maynard was staring at the photograph. In that instant each sensibly felt the clash of personalities. Maynard turned, and they stood with eyes enchained, speechless and watchful.

The door was closed, the window was open, and thru it the soft, cool air of May came into the dimly lighted room as a fragrant breath of spring, filling it with an odor from the hills as subtle as the silences of the eventide. The absolute stillness of a speechless moment was broken by Fox whining at the door his low entreaties to be admitted. The light from a swinging lamp shed its limited rays in a pool upon the floor between, marking a dividing line. Back of Dr. Hallam and slightly to his left was the little table holding Nancy's lovely, girlish face framed in a beautiful setting of his own selection. Maynard's eyes wandered to it, then back to Dr. Hallam with a cold, steady glare.

"Where did you get it?" he asked.

"I have had it for more than three years."

"But where did you get it? Did she give it to you?"

"She did not." Dr. Hallam's voice was incisively brief.

"That don't answer the question," thundered Maynard. "I want to know where you got it."

"And I decline to answer."

"You do, huh!" He thrust his chin forward aggressively, his heavy face red with anger. "Give it here," he said and took a step forward.

Dr. Hallam seized the picture from its setting and put it in his pocket. Then he turned to Maynard with an air of quiet determination.

"You can't have it. If you had come to me in any other way than that of a bulldozer I might have given it to you as a means of pacification; but get it out of your head that you or any man can run a bluff."

"Bluff!" shouted Maynard with a purple face; and before Dr. Hallam was prepared for the onslaught he was upon him, fiercely striking with his hard fists.

ONE blow hit Dr. Hallam on the side of the head and nearly knocked him down. Maynard took advantage of it to grasp him about the body in an attempt to get the picture out of his pocket, but Dr. Hallam, recovering his balance, turned his surprising strength and skill upon the older man and before Maynard knew precisely how it happened he lay upon the floor, his hands held as in a vise, with Dr. Hallam kneeling upon him.

Neither spoke. As Maynard lay helpless and panting he looked into the eyes of the younger man and saw what he had never suspected—sternness and inflexibility of purpose as astonishing as the strength which had conquered him. Henry Hamilton had never been noted for courage in the face of even chances, and he was unable to reconcile his previous conception of that person with the cold, immovable man who held him not only with physical strength, but with impressive mental force as well. His eyes wavered and over his face there crept a helpless look. Seeing which Dr. Hallam released him and let him get to his feet.

"I won't strike you," he said, "but I am not of a mind to let you beat me, even tho you are an old man."

He came very near saying, "even tho you are her father," but catching himself in time, he finished the sentence otherwise, and pointed to the door.

"When you have cooled down I may send the picture to you," he continued. "But if I do, please remember that it is done voluntarily. I am sorry for the trouble, for I would much rather be friends."

"Friends!" sneered Maynard. "Friends with a crook!"

Dr. Hallam winced, but made no move to resent the insult. When Maynard went out he let Fox into the room and then sat down by the window to think over the cause for Maynard's visit, the disagreeable turn it would give to future events, and the even more dangerous prospect in store for him should he persist in remaining about Rock Springs.

EVIDENCES were creeping out in various places to indicate the temper of the people. To his surprise even Lyons had become less cordial. Gilmore's manner, too, was becoming even more taunting than it had been. Coupling the veiled aloofness of the populace with Pap Maynard's open enmity, and the intuitive feeling that Powers was attempting to blackmail him, he realized that he had reached the summit of a dangerous volcano. Applying his ear to the earth of it, he was not surprised at the rumbling noises beneath. His safety lay in keeping them away from the channel which would lead directly to his door thru knowledge of his false identity.

He regretted, not that he had embarked upon the dangerous course, but that he had not met Nancy before he was tempted to do so. But for the lure which lies in love he would have mounted his horse and ridden away from it all in the silence of enveloping night. Truly Circerean images held him back. Cold, hard, merciless lines gathered about his lips, and in the end he was unalterably fixed in his determination not to give up what he had gained; neither to relinquish his love until persuasion and pleading had failed.

The next day he sought for Nancy. And the next. But not for several days did he see her again. In the meantime the feeling of the populace was being openly manifested in a way to show that he would be subject almost at any moment to open insults. To avoid them, he avoided the town; but never once did he relinquish his resolution, nor relax his vigilance. A roll of blankets was kept ready for instant flight; and his horse, which was usually given the freedom of the hill, was tethered near the house day and night.

A WEEK later he sat beneath the sparse limbs of a stunted tree on the edge of the tabletop land. As he swept the country with his glass, he saw Mrs. Maynard come out of the house and drive toward the town in a light buggy. Then Nancy appeared upon the porch and leveled her opera glass upon the hill. He waved his arm and she waved back at him—a beckoning motion. Instantly he saddled Satan and rode away at a rapid pace. Skirting the base of the hill, he passed from the neck of the valley into the deeper gulches and approached the Maynard residence to within a quarter of a mile, where Nancy met him.

"What have you been doing?" she cried. "Pap won't let me go out of the house and he says he is going to run you out of camp."

Dr. Hallam laughed bitterly, and dismounted.

"I am ready to go whenever you will go with me," he said. "That is all I am waiting for."

"But what did you do? What was the trouble?"

He told her. "And so you see," he concluded, "I could do nothing else than I did. I know that trouble is trying to be forced upon me, especially thru Ben Gilmore, but I can't—I won't go until you are ready to go with me."

"Don't ask me, Henry. Please don't. And let me tell you quick, for I am in a hurry. There is a stranger in town who has been asking about you—a lawyer from Oregon. He and Ben Gilmore got drunk last night and he told Ben that he could send you to the penitentiary if he wanted to."

Dr. Hallam sustained the shock with admirable self-control. He laughed at the assertion as absurd.

"Do you know who the man is?" she asked.

"Yes. He is a man who has been trying to blackmail me. A few days ago he wanted to borrow five thousand dollars and I suspect that it is because I refused him he has come here. I will take care of him—so don't worry over that. The main point is—you. I want you to go with me. I wouldn't urge it if conditions were different, but we cannot marry here, for your father will never consent."

Nancy lifted her troubled eyes to his face.

"Yes, I know," she said.

"Then if you love me you will go," he urged. "Isn't a husband more than the father, the mother—more than all? Oh! Nancy dear, no human being on earth could turn me from you if you wanted me! Won't you come with me?"

His voice was low and tender and Nancy put her two hands against his cheeks and kissed him in a thrill of sudden emotion.

"Let us wait a little longer," she pleaded. "Just one more week. Let me talk

(Continued on Page 12.)

Eric Strongbow

By J. C. Koford

ERIC STRONGBOW folded his massive arms across his chest, and stared down at the weazened, white-robed man with silent contempt. They stood alone on the Runic Rock, silhouetted against the flaming glory of the sunset. A hundred feet below thundered the surf. In the swash and hiss of the spray one might hear the voices of lost souls whom the votaries of the War God had hurled to it as sacrifices.

"It hast come to mine ears that thou scoffed against Thor," the old man cried, raising his shriveled arms in malediction, "against him and against our order. Is it sooth?"

"And what then?" asked Eric, carelessly. "It is true that I love battle and manly games, but there my blood lust endeth. Thou killest women and children for this Thor of thine, and for that I scorn him and thee——"

The fanatic's self control snapped. He flung himself at the Viking, raging with all his puny strength. "Thor's curse upon thee!" he screamed. "Thy best beloved shall requite that insult with death. Dost hear?"

Laughing, Strongbow seized the priest of Thor and held him over the dizzy gulf. "Wouldst still have thy revenge, oh, priest?"

The old man stared at him with wide and entirely unfrightened eyes, and Eric set him safely on his feet. "Take thy life, churl, and use it for better things than thou hast in the past," he said, and, whistling, strode up the rocky causeway.

A giant was Eric Strongbow—blond, blue-eyed, and muscled like Hercules. Hot of temper, terrible in anger, yet was the tenderness of his heart a byword thru all of Denmark. In sword play none was counted his equal, while in strength he stood alone—unconquerable.

His father, Visbur Jarl, awaited him in the great hall. There was something in the elder's mien that stiffened Eric with unconscious resistance. Perhaps it but was a reflection of his quarrel with the priest, but the portent was sooth.

"Thou knowest," said the Jarl, "that the Earl of Orkney hath been my guest. Knowest thou why?"

"Nay, Jarl."

"We will seal the pact of friendliness between each, our lands, with a child. Thou wilt wed his daughter, Snowfrid. Thou wilt obey my commands."

Strongbow's frank face clouded..

"I?"

"Even thou. There is naught to find complaint with in that, by Hela! Snowfrid is coveted by every princeling in the Northland. Her beauty and wit are unsurpassed. What fault hath thou to find with her, difficult son?"

Eric was quicker with sword than with tongue. He stood picking at the edge of his tunic, the while he thought to phrase the tumult of his thoughts. At length he spoke, but haltingly, for opposition to even a parent's slightest wish was unknown to the children of the frost.

"Snowfrid is all thou sayest, but my pulses do not quicken at her step. Beautiful is she as the sun, but to me as cold as the snow that reflects its glare."

"Thou carest naught for her?"

"Nay."

"Yet it is my wish, Eric." The old man spoke gently, but inflexibly, "It is my wish that thou take her to wife."

"I HAVE no wish to wed, nor yet be mated thus as one of thy wolf dogs——"

"Enough," cried the Jarl harshly. "By the hammer of Thor! thou shalt obey me. Am I to appear to this Earl of Orkney as a woman without power in my own household? Tomorrow thou sailest with Thorgils to the sack of Ireland, but between the setting and the rising of the sun thy betrothal shall be consummated, or may I forever make my cold bed in the darkness of Niffleheim!"

The heat of anger that burned within the young Viking touched cheeks redly, but he held to his temper with an iron grip. "Thy word is law, Jarl," he said with grim quiet, "but thou promised if I brought back the crown from the head of Ireland's king thou wouldst give me anything for the asking. I shall ask for my liberty."

"Denmark! May She Conquer the World, and May Her Heroes All Be Chosen by the Fates to Sit with Odin in Valhalla! Skoal!"

Visbur did not answer and his face was immobile.

"Thorgils goes to steal the daughter of the King, I his crown. What sayest thou to that, Jarl?"

The old man laughed, but the sound was bitter. "I did but jest. Thou wilt never strip his crown from Malachy's head, thou upstart boy. If thou dost thou may ask for aught thy heart desires, but so sure am I that thou wilt fail that thy betrothal feast shall be celebrated this very night."

"As thou biddest." With a shrug that attempted to express the indifference he did not feel, Strongbow turned, and with panther step, strode out into the twilight. In his heart there bubbled a deep anger, keener for being suppressed, that made him gnaw his lips savagely. That he, a warrior already famous and the son of a Jarl to boot, should be mated as dogs are mated was not to be borne! Not that Snowfrid was distasteful to him. He was proud of her passionless beauty, and had planned to bear her wondrous gifts of jewels and what-not when he returned from this expedition on which he was to embark, his armor clad shoulders heavy with the weight of honors. But to wed thus! Even a bondservant was more free to choose than he—a noble of the blood. Musing bitterly, Eric stared at the house that sheltered Orkney's Earl. The melancholy darkness tuned in harmonious accord with his own spirits.

While standing there, Strongbow became conscious of whispering voices round the angle of the long stone porch. It was a day when never ending vigilance was the price of an unravaged home. With light tread and hand on dagger, the Viking crept thru a mass of verdure that tangled close to the wall.

There stood Snowfrid clasped within the sheltering arms of the songmaker, Olaf, sobbing her heart out upon his shoulder. Eric drew back with a quick, indrawn breath as he heard the scald's tense whisper. Then came the princess' voice, lower, yet with unutterable heartbreak in it.

"Nay, Olaf, it must be as my father wills. Tonight is our last together, tho my heart is nigh crushed within me at the thought. But, tho I be wife to another, my heart shall ever be thine."

The scald answered passionately, and there was something of his own poetry in the fierce defiance. "Why should thou suffer the ambition of thy father to blight thy life? The Norns, goddesses of fate spinning there by the mighty ash-tree, Ygdrasil, have promised happiness if thou come with me, naught but disaster if thy wedding night finds thee in the embrace of the Jarl's son. Ah, had I but him at my dagger point ——"

Tho Eric was throbbing in sympathy with the anguish of the lovers, that defiance was more than his fiery nature could bear without retort. His ringed arm thrust aside the branches, and he stood before them, the misty moonlight flashing on his mail byrnie.

"What would thou do, Olaf, had thou the Jarl's son at thy dagger point?"

He Hurled the Heavy Weapon Thru the Air, The Point Buried Itself in the Thunderer's Shoulder, and His Arms Dropped, Perforce, From Eileen's Body.

FOR an instant the scald was speechless, and then, the realization of what he was to lose flooding him, he leaped at Eric, his voice thinned in rage-choked shrillness. The Viking gripped the boy in his mighty hands, holding him helpless, and stared wonderingly down into the distorted face. How love changed a man, transforming his nature! Before the songmaker had fallen to the Gerda-like beauty of the Earl's daughter a milder and better mannered youth was not to be found between the seas. Now, snarling and bitter, intent on a revenge he could not achieve——

"Hurt him not, Eric," pled Snowfrid, laying a cold hand on his arm. "It was for love of me that he spoke thus. Canst thou not forgive it when thou art taking from him that for which he cares——"

"Thor knows I wish ye might wed," said Strongbow unhappily. "Tho I respect and admire thee, Snowfrid, this match is no more to my liking than it is to thine. But my word is plighted, and wed thee I must." His fist dropped from Olaf's shoulder. "Thy wound is bitter, but I can do naught to heal it, unless——"

The scald, his face twitching, held out a hand. "Thou art a man," he stammered, and turning, fled in the darkness.

Silently, and with a new respect, Eric brought the Earl's daughter to her stern father, and it was still in silence that they mounted with the entire household to ride to the feast-hall of Visbur Jarl.

When his home was reached Eric sought out the Jarl, and frankly told him that Snowfrid cared not for him, nor he for her, that her heart was bound up in another; that——

Visbur listened with frowning brow. "Let this end the matter. Unless thou bringest me Malachy's crown, thou shalt wed when thou returnest from Ireland, and tho Thor himself pled your cause he might not change my purpose."

As Eric left his father's presence, Helvin, his brother, laid a hand on his arm. "Nay, this is a sorry countenance to wear to thy bethrothal feast. I know why thou feelest thus, but smile when the cup is handed thee, lest thou bring discredit on a lovely maid."

Strongbow, looking down into his kinsman's frank blue eyes, felt suddenly strengthened, so mighty was the bond of affection between them. Thus it was that his head was high and his smile almost joyful as he led Snowfrid into the feast-hall.

At the lower table sat Olaf, the scald, his face mirroring tragedy when he saw the woman he loved being pledged to another. Somehow, Eric forgot all petty affairs of self and love when Thorgils the Thunderer, supreme among Viking chiefs, rose with a golden goblet in his hand, and gave them, "Denmark! May she conquer the world, and may her heroes all be chosen by the Fates to sit with Odin in Valhalla! Skoal!"

Strongbow found himself on his feet, shouting with the rest, but thru the forest of waving swords he caught a glimpse of the songmaker, chin on palm, staring heedlessly before him. Then came the black browed face of the Thunderer between, and he saw it no more.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE LANDFALL AT IRELAND AND ERIC'S STEADFAST OATH.

IT WAS in the year of man's redemption, 832, that Thorgils the Thunderer, his one hundred and twenty galleys filled to overflowing with fearless Vikings, made a landfall on the coast of Ireland. His vision of conquest was the dream of a virile, lustful savage. For the land itself he cared naught. It was for honor and plunder that he roved, and, as he stood in the prow of his foremost ship, under the famous battle flag of the Raven, he swore that only death should bar him from the winning of fame and riches on this expedition—fame and riches, and Eileen, the daughter of the King.

Behind him lounged Eric and his brother Helvin, speaking in low tones together, and the Thunderer turned his hard, black bearded face toward them. "What thinkest thou, Visbur's sons, of the land we have come to conquer?"

Strongbow, who had been staring across the water at the dawn stealing over the hills of Ireland, raised his eyes to the chieftain's face. "The home of the gods could be no more beautiful, and yet it is in my mind that many of our men will find their death before we win it for our own."

"And what of that?" demanded Thorgils savagely. "Hast thy new love turned thy blood to water? The more honor for they who live, I say. Art thou afraid?"

Eric drew his powerful form to its full height, until his ice blue eyes were on a level with the snapping black ones of the Thunderer. Under the shadow of the golden hair that tangled on his brow his tanned cheeks were flushed. Not in all the Northland was there a man to match him in beauty or in mighty strength, and well had the scalds sung of him as the god, Baldur's, only rival.

"Afraid, Thorgils?" he repeated. "When hast thou known one of my blood to show fear?"

For a long minute the bearded chief bore the stern gaze of the younger man, and then, with a muttered oath, turned away. Laughing, Eric leaned upon the gunwale and resumed his conversation.

Helvin laid a hand upon the other's arm. "Brother, make not an enemy of the Thunderer, I pray. Tho thy thews are as iron and thy heart of oak, none can match him in swordplay."

But Eric laughed lightly, and pressed his brother's hand with deep affection. "Remember thou the saying of Starkad the Soothsayer, 'Courage is better than sword strength,' and for all his fame I fear not Thorgils. Hasten! 'Tis the moment to land. It must not be said that the sons of Visbur Jarl were ever laggard in a fight."

Already the galleys had grounded on the sandy beach. The Danes in their leathern clothes and brass helmets leaped into the water and swashed ashore. Hardly had they set foot on land before the Irish were among them, cutting and slashing, fighting with the desperation that could only be born in men whose homes are endangered by a terrible foe. But, with the Thunderer, Eric, Helvin and other chiefs leading them, battle axes and swords flashing, the Vikings bore back their attackers, hurled them bleeding from the field. At their heels raged Thorgils' men, and all that summer day slaughter and flame ravaged the shores of Ireland.

SHOULDER to shoulder with his brother, Strongbow fought as he had often done before. The cloying odor of sweat and blood, the hissing swish of steel, the panting, the screaming, the fury-convulsed faces were all as the breath of life to him. He felt no fear, only an excited thrill of joy, and sometimes, as a white, startled face winched under a blow, a throb of pity. But the dangerous game of war was a delight to him, as, indeed it was to every warrior in that barbaric age.

When the defense had apparently been crushed, Malachy, the Ard-Righ of Ireland, with a thousand knights in their war chariots, burst down upon the invaders, and there ensued so fell a battle that fathers still whisper of it to their awe-struck children in the shadows of rush lighted huts. With vengeance in their hearts, the knights, each erect in his flying chariot, bore down on the Danish battle line.

It was a sight to chill the blood of the hardiest, yet not a man flinched. They showered javelins upon the racing animals, and then leaped into the chariots to fight a hand-to-hand battle with the flower of Innes-Fail's chivalry. Many a man was crushed by the flying wheels, many were battered into nothingness by horses' hoofs, but they were fearless, and would not be denied.

So long as it was possible Eric and Helvin fought side by side, but a swirl of men drove them apart at last. Then came the opportunity for Thorgils, the mighty tool of the priests of Zeus. His javelin found the heart of Helvin, but to Strongbow it was whispered that the King had wielded that implement of death.

Instantly his battle lust turned to berserk fury. He hacked and hewed a path with his great two-handed sword until he was within a spear's length of Malachy. He forgot the crown that would free him. All he sought was the Ard-Righ's life. But the current of battle swept him away ere he could accomplish his purpose.

Once, in the searing heat, Eric stumbled over a Viking, one Rael, who lay stunned, with a huge fel-

(Continued on Page 8.)

THE SUICIDE of WILKINS

BY C. M. RAMAGE

"SO, POOR old Bill has tuberculosis?" said Smithers.

"Yes; started for Arizona yesterday."

"No good!" said Smithers oracularly. "If I had tuberculosis I'd shoot myself and be done with it!"

"Oh, I say, now!" protested little Wilkins. "It's curable, is it not?"

"Curable? Not that anybody knows of! Look at Hunt! Look at Goodman! Think of a dozen others that we have known who have gone away for their lung's sake in the last ten years. They're all dead, ain't they?"

Yes, they were. The argument continued at some length; and as Wilkins balanced his books for the day he had an uncomfortable feeling. What if his cough should prove to be tuberculosis? He would see a doctor soon—maybe tomorrow. No, tonight—right away! A panic seized him and he hurried his work, put on his overcoat and hat, and sought a doctor.

Now, the chance which had led Wilkins to seek a doctor took him to the office of Doctor Mason. Doctor Mason was a well-trained young physician who had spent two years as assistant physician in a tuberculosis sanitarium. His work at this place had been mainly the examining of applicants for admission. Very naturally, most of the lungs he examined were affected by the dread disease or the people would not have been applying for entrance. The result was that Doctor Mason had gotten the idea that nearly every one had pulmonary tuberculosis. Further, he thought that in case of doubt, diagnose the case as one of tuberculosis; for the resulting treatment would do no harm.

He made Wilkins strip, and laid him on a table that looked like one Wilkins had once seen in an undertaker's establishment! He thumped him, made marks all over his chest with a blue pencil, and then listened at these marks with a lengthening face. Finally he said bluntly: "You have tuberculosis!" Wilkins fainted. Doctor Mason was pleased with the impression he had made.

"Now," said he, when Wilkins had been revived, "you seem to realize the seriousness of the terrible scourge which is killing one hundred and fifty thousand people every year in the United States! You probably do not know what a menace you are to those who may be associating with you. You must not—m-m-ble—not—and m-m-m——"

Wilkins was apparently listening; but he was not hearing a word. His thoughts were at the little cottage where his wife and Toodlems awaited his approach and his blighting kisses! Maybe they had already caught the disease from him! Oh, merciful Heavens! Smithers was right! He should put himself beyond the power of injuring them. What a wretch he would be to continue in their presence, spreading the dread disease in the air that she and Toodlems breathed! And chubby-legged Toodlems just learning to talk!

"As I was saying," continued the doctor, "your only chance for life depends on a close observance of my directions. Avoid all exposure—m-m-b—ble must not—m-m-m-ble——" Wilkins was again oblivious of all things save the great horror of himself.

The doctor's impersonal oration at length closed; and as his voice ceased Wilkins came back to the present. Mechanically he said "yes" and "no" and "I don't know" to several questions, paid the doctor five dollars and went out.

Whither? Home? To give Sweetheart and Toodlems tuberculosis? Never! The river! Carbolic acid—anything would be better than that! But wait! What would Sweetheart do if he committed suicide! His insurance policies had a clause in them that prohibited suicide! She would be left penniless and Toodlems could not go to Yale!

The extent of his problem made him calm. Wilkins was a little man. He was a clerk. He would always be a clerk, probably. He had never faced a great problem before. His mind in this crisis seized as the great point that he must get away from his loved ones. Death was the only means offered; and the suicide must be adroitly covered up so that the companies would pay Sweetheart the insurance. He had ten thousand dollars on his life, and the cottage was paid for. What had the doctor said he must not do? Expose himself! Therefore, exposure would speedily end the matter! Wilkins felt a part of the great load lifted from his heart and hurried home, formulating the remainder of his plans.

THE little tan cottage, trimmed in neat brown, was brightly lighted as he came home thru the November dusk. Toodlems made an animated silhouette in the window seat. Sweetheart came and stood beside him just at that moment, anxious because of Wilkin's lateness.

He straightened his shoulders and ran up the steps. Sweetheart threw open the door with a glad cry of welcome, while Toodlems shrieked, "Tum pay bear, Papa! Tum pay bear wif Toodlems!"

Wilkins brushed past them with an affected laugh and said: "No kisses this evening. Doctor told me I had—er—la—laryngous bronchitis, and that you and Toodlems would catch it if I kissed you, Sweetheart. It's not serious, dear, but until I shake it off I must not kiss either of you."

Sweetheart was aghast for an instant; and then, "Well, you needn't kiss Toodlems; but you must kiss me! Why! you must always kiss me!" and her lips trembled.

"And give you laryncatis bronchitis? I guess not!" said Wilkins emphatically, and coughing violently. "Then you'd kiss Toodlems and he might die!"

"Oh! But how long will you have that—what do you call it?"

"Not very long. I'll doctor it carefully. The doctor said—er—oh, I will tell you all about it after supper. I'm hungry now. Well, Toodlems, have you been a good boy today?"

"Yeth, but ain't 'oo doin' to pay wif me?"

"Sure! But we'll have to play a new game! Daddy's sick. Now you go 'way over in the corner and Daddy will play sick bear. Whenever I come near you, you hit me with a broom!" This new game was a howling success.

Sweetheart very soberly put the supper on the table. The meal was a trifle constrained, tho Wilkins talked rapidly and tried to make them laugh.

"Tiss me good-night, Daddy," drowsily said Toodlems after supper.

"I'll give you a willywoppus kiss," said Daddy.

"What's 'at?"

"Willywoppusses kiss each other—er—on the back of the neck," said Wilkins; and Toodlems gleefully accepted another institution.

"Now, dear," began Wilkins, when the baby was tucked away, "this is more serious than I have led you to believe. The doctor said this form of bronchitis was very hard to cure; and that it is very contagious. It may take two months for me to get well. During that time I must not kiss any one and must not sleep in the room with any one. My laundry must be kept from yours and Toodlems."

Sweetheart was crying softly, and Wilkins clumsily continued, "Why, only two months, Sweetheart——" a flashing look of scorn checked him—and she resumed her soft crying.

"I mean, of course, that it will be terribly hard for me, too; but I can't have my wife and boy sick with bronchitis. Now give me a willywoppus kiss and go to bed. You look tired!"

Silently she moved to the door, her head averted. Wilkins, with ashen face sprang to her and crushed her to him, keeping his head turned from her, while her repressed sobs burst forth in a flood of grief.

"Dearest," he choked, "it will be hard for you; but we must be brave." Then playfully he kissed her at the nape of her neck and said, "I have some papers to look over that will take me an hour; so you go to bed like a good little girl."

When she was gone he collapsed in a chair. For an hour he remained motionless, with only an occasional shudder passing over his thin, sloping shoulders. Then he went to the secretary and wrote feverishly for a half hour, a letter to his wife, full of love and business directions.

At Sweetheart's open door he heard her soft, regular sleep-breathing. No burglar was ever so guiltily self-conscious as he was for the next few minutes. He came out of his room dressed in an old suit of clothes, with a bathrobe over his arm. Down the stairs and out the back door he softly hurried, leaving the bathrobe in the kitchen.

At the rear of his yard was a large field, and in this a reservoir which supplied a mill farther down the valley. On the edge of the reservoir Wilkins paused and listened. Secure from interruption, he waded into the icy water until it came up to his neck. Then the very acuteness of the stinging chill numbing his sensations, his boyhood came back to him, and he swam out fifty yards boldly and back to the shore. Like a frightened rabbit he scurried home, stripped off his wet clothes in the cold November night, hid them under the stoop and stepped into the kitchen numb and blue with cold.

"If that won't cause pneumonia, I don't know what will!" he chattered, as he got into his bathrobe and went softly to his room.

WHEN Wilkins awoke the next morning, Sweetheart was kneeling by his bed with her arms around him, kissing him awake.

"You did not cough once all night, dearest," she cried, "and when I came came in to waken you, you were sleeping like a child! Your cheeks are pink and your eyes bright. I don't think you are sick."

"The fever is rising," thought Wilkins with a kind of triumph. He gently and firmly repeated his objections to kissing. Sweetheart was openly and roguishly defiant.

"I must hurry matters!" muttered Wilkins in alarm, when she had gone.

He dressed, and ate a large breakfast. "It will encourage the fever," ran thru out his mind as he consumed bacon and eggs, toast, coffee and oatmeal.

Then he bestowed the new kiss on two warm necks, and hurried to work.

Out of the sight of the house he removed his overcoat and muffler, and strode along in the chill morning air. He was not surprised at his feeling of well-being, attributing it to the rising fever. The absence of his cough worried him so much that he casually asked Smithers, "What does it mean when a chap with tuberculosis quits coughing?"

"Means he had better be measured for his shroud," declared the pessimistic Smithers; and Wilkins again felt better at this confirmation of his hopes.

Daily for two weeks, three weeks, a month, Wilkins had taken his icy swim after Sweetheart had gone to bed. Finally he had to break the ice and be content with a wetting. He saw that soon the reservoir would be frozen too solidly for his purposes. And one night, just after he had hidden the old suit under the stoop and gotten into his bath robe, Sweetheart came into the kitchen to get Toodlems a drink of water.

"Why, dearest!" she cried. "How you frightened me! What on earth are you doing?"

"I forgot to lock the door," he said glibly. "Ain't it cold?"

"Awfully! Kiss me just once, won't you, dear?"

"Naughty, naughty!" he countered, laughing. "Do' to bed or papa whip naughty dirl!" and he fled.

In his bed, he buried his head in his pillow to keep from screaming out in agony. For thirty days he had nurtured hopes of a speedy death; and only today gloomy old Smithers had told him "how well he looked!" Would pneumonia never come? He had eaten four times as much as usual and his clothes were getting tight. At first he thought it was bloatedness; but it was solid! He was strong. He had not coughed for days! Poor little Sweetheart was looking badly. He suspicioned that she cried much in secret. Toodlems was becoming unruly from his neglect. Something must be done, and yet, the suicide must be adroit! It must be beyond the suspicions of the excuse-seeking insurance companies!

Little Wilkins had levied heavily on his small stock of resourcefulness and found it now bankrupt. His fine plan was failing, and he did not known which way to turn. He decided to consult another doctor to see how much longer he had to live as a menace to his loved ones.

NOW, the Fates which played the scurvy joke on Wilkins of sending him to Doctor Mason, were repentant; so in the morning, when he hurried down a side street seeking a doctor's sign, these repentant Fates made the sign of Doctor Boggs loom large before Wilkins' eyes. He entered the office.

Doctor Boggs was honest, and therefore very poor.

"Doctor," said Wilkins, "I have tuberculosis, and wish to know how long I have to live, what I must do and what I must not do!" (Rather good way of putting it, thought Wilkins.)

"Strip!" said Doc Boggs, in a voice

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THE GREAT
MYSTERY
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which could be heard for two blocks, and motioning Wilkins to an old leather couch. Wilkins laid own.

Leisurely the doctor made his examination. "The upper half of the right lung——" began Wilkins volubly. "Shut up!" roared Boggs.

Lungs, heart, sputum, kidneys, blood, eyes were examined. Doctor Boggs was thoro. At the end of an hour he lighted a villainous pipe and, blowing smoke into Wilkins' face, said, "Are you trying to string me?"

"Wh-wh-what?" stammered Wilkins.

"I said are you trying to string me—fool me? Don't you know the English language?" roared Boggs.

"I—I—no—I am sincere, Doctor——" and little Wilkins burst into tears. The terrible strain of weeks broke forth, and he wept as unaffectedly as a child.

Doctor Boggs smoked on until Wilkins' sobs were under control.

"Now look here, old man!" said Boggs, gently, "you tell me the beginning, the end, and the middle of this business." And Wilkins, aghast at himself, told the whole story of his fear of consumption, of the other doctor, of his courting death, and all. While he was talking, Doctor Boggs reached for his handkerchief and bowed his head. Before the story was finished his shoulders were heaving, and he was catching his breath. ("And I thought at first that he was unsympathetic!" thought Wilkins.)

WHEN the story was finished, Doctor Boggs burst into a roar of laughter that shok the office. He yelled; he slapped his legs; he beat Wilkins on the back; he guffawed and held his sides, while Wilkins looked around fearfully for an avenue of escape from this lunatic! At length he became calm.

"Now listen, you young ass!" he gasped. "Tuberculosis is very curable in its early stages. If you ever had it, which I doubt, you are entirely cured. The cold plunges you took are the quickest cure on earth for cases of your type! Oh, but this is rich! Rich!" and he had another laugh. "And—and he tried to ruin his stomach—and his arms and legs got bloated!" gasped the doctor almost strangling. "And—and his cough stopped—and his deep sleep was a sign of weakness—ha, ha, ha!"

"I am really well then?" tremulously asked Wilkins.

Suddenly serious, Doctor Boggs said, "Yes! You are physically almost perfect in condition! Now, use your cold plunges in more moderation. Take regular, out-of-doors exercise. Eat all you want of whatever you want—and God bless you for the darndest fool I ever met!"

Wilkins laughed gleefully. "I was an awful fool, wasn't I?" he said.

"It is often hard to separate the fool and the hero," said Doctor Boggs huskily. He had been laughing a great deal.

Wilkins paid his bill and walked out into the December air. No convict just freed ever saw the myriad beauties of the out-of-door world as did Wilkins at that moment.

He called a taxi and hurried to the bank two hours late. He made his excuses to the cashier and demanded a day off, which was granted. Then he raced to the little cottage. The meter said two dollars and sixty cents; but he threw the chauffeur a five-dollar bill and yelled, "No change!" and hurried into the house.

Sweetheart came to the door in alarm, and Toodlem's eyes were big at this unheard of happening.

"I'm well! I'm well!" yelled Wilkins, smothering first one and then the other with kisses, real kisses!

"Pay bear, Daddy! Pay bear!" shrieked Toodlems; and such a wild, glorious bear was never seen.

Breathless, Wilkins explained. "I'm cured! Doctor said so 'smorning! I have a holiday. We'll play bear and kiss each other until lunch time. Then we'll all go for a ride in a rubber-neck wagon like we did once on our wedding-trip, Sweetheart! Then a funny show and supper at the Grand Hotel!"

"O-O-Oh!" cried Sweetheart. "How lovely!" Then she began to cry.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Wilkins.

"I'm s-so h-happy!" sobbed Sweetheart.

"I know just how you feel!" emphatically said Wilkins. "I almost did it myself!"

That evening Doctor Boggs was walking thru the park. By the lake he paused and looked down at the cold, forbidding waters, musing. He smiled whimsically and muttered:

"A fool and a hero! They're hard to separate!"

Empty.

A WOULD-BE member of Parliament had for an hour been vainly trying to capture the interest of his audience. At last he made a desperate bid for it.

"What are the so-called patriots at present in the House?" he yelled. "Humbugs, every one of them! Parasites of party! I pledge myself to no party. Rather would I write across my forehead, in letters easily read, the words 'To Let!'"

"And below them," called a cold voice, "'unfurnished!'"

Eric Strongbow

(Continued From Page 6)

low bending over him, knife in hand, ready to send his soul to Valhalla. It was but a by-play of the battlefield, but without it the Viking's life would have turned barren. There was no necessity for words, and when Strongbow wiped his sword on the dead man's doublet and helped Rael to his feet, the Viking, with stoicism of his kind, said nothing, but followed his saviour into the thick of the fight.

It was late in the day when the victorious Danes streamed back over the battlefield to the ships. Eric, his heart heavy under his steel tunic, scanned every heap of dead with expressionless eyes. At last he found his brother where the javelin had struck him down. Tho dying, Helvin had dragged himself to a shattered oak and bound himself to it with his mantle, that he might meet death on his feet as become the son of a Jarl. There he hung, head sagging, eyes wide, drawn sword in his hand.

Eric dropped on his knees before the stiffened body of his kinsman, and breathed a prayer thru clinched teeth to the great War God to strengthen his arm when the day came that he could avenge his gentle brother's death. When he arose, lips set tightly, blue eyes dark with purpose, Thorgils the Thunderer stood beside him, impassive as the ice that glittered on northern seas.

"Who killed thy brother, Strongbow?"

The young Viking answered slowly. "He died by the High-King's own hand, but if it lies within me he shall not long remain unavenged——"

THORGILS smiled grimly in the depths of his beard. There was a way of utilizing Eric's volcanic hatred as a means to further his own ends, and the chief was as famous for his trickery as he was for the strength of his sword arm. "Thou canst avenge thy brother's death more hardly than by the killing of Malachy. The Ard-Righ hath a daughter, beautiful, they say, as Freya herself. Tear her from her father's hall, and the heart of him who slew thy brother will be like unto a shattered glass. What say thou to that, youngling?"

Eric's eyes flamed with sudden bitterness. "Now, may the trolls take me, if thy advice is not good to my ears. The King shall feel the weight of my hand even in his own feast-hall. Give me but a single companion, and I will have the girl here ere the morning dawns."

"Take whom thou wilt," said the Thunderer carelessly, "and may Thor bring you safely back."

For the first time Eric shot a glance of real suspicion at his chief. Never had the sea king been friendly, and the defiance Strongbow had shown on the poop of the galey should have but widened the breach between them. Then he banished distrust, and held out his hand. "My thanks to you, Thorgils, and the man I choose is Rael."

The Skraelling whose life he had saved strode forward. "I am thy man, lord, and thy thrall will be till I die. None but I shall go with thee on this mission."

"We will go together, comrade. Thou could no more hold back than I could stay thee, and I would not stay thee if I could. All that man can give to man I know thou wilt give to me. So come."

With face of stone, Eric Strongbow, Visbur's son, took one last, fond look at his dead kinsman, bound so proudly against the tree, the setting sun turning his raven-crested helmet to pure gold. Beside him, knee deep in the twisted heap of slain, stood the Thunderer, chuckling in the depths of his huge black beard.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE LOVE THAT WAS BORN IN ERIC'S BREAST AND WHAT BEFELL THEREAFTER.

MALACHY, High-King of Ireland, sat in the high seat of his feast-hall, and stared moodily down the long line of tables, where sat the shattered remnants of his men-at-arms. He pretended to eat and drink, but sickened worry kept food from his lips. And, indeed, there was naught but gloom in the faces of all, for their defeat presaged the destruction of his country and flung the land helpless before the wantonness of a pagan invader.

When the warriors had finished their midnight repast, the King arose, his wearied eyes sweeping over them in martial glance. "Men of Ireland," he cried, "there is much for us to accomplish before the godless Danes sit down to meat in this hall. We will show them how we can fight and die. Ulidia, Lagenia, Conact, Thomond, Desmond will rise to our call, but we must be the sacrifice until they come. For myself I care nothing, but for the women and children, and my daughter"—he laid his hand caressingly on the shoulder of the Princess Eileen.

"Nay, father," she answered clearly, with a queenly toss of her beautiful head, "sorrow not for me, nor for my sisters, the women of Ireland. What thou canst bear, so, too, can we, and tho Thorgils ravage the land from Malin Head to Courtmascherry he'll find naught but a stern welcome from us."

How the knights of Tara howled their approbation of her brave words! She stepped from her high seat, and walked slowly to the door. The martial ardor had fled her face; replacing it was an expression of womanly sorrow for the wounded, blood-smeared warriors who watched her with adoring eyes.

The outer door was flung open with a crash, and into the feast hall of the Ard-Righ bounded a great armored figure, sword in hand. The light of the torches, flickering on his golden hair, on the raven that crested his helmet, on the long, two-handed sword, brought a shout of horror from the men-at-arms. It was the God of War incarnate, and for an instant their superstitions bound them helpless to their seats.

In that fragment of time a thick-bodied, hairy man, a Skraelling by his brass helmet and leather clothes, leaped from the shadow of the door, flung his arms about Eileen, and disappeared again into the darkness. Before the amazed courtiers could collect their scattered wits, Eric flung the massive portal shut behind him, and hurled himself into the waiting chariot, while the Viking scourged the horses to their greatest speed.

A gasping little moan drew Strongbow's attention to the body of the girl, huddled in a pitiful heap at his feet. Elbows on knees, face curious, he peered into her features, whitened by the moon into an unnatural pallor.

Eileen, the daughter of the King, was beautiful in face and form as the unmatched goddess, Gerda, to whom Eric had often sent his simple prayers. The foam upon the broken sea was not half so radiant as the far-sung beauty of her eyes, nor could aught but the snow-fields of Iceland match the damask of her cheek.

As the swaying chariot, and the Viking's unswerving gaze brought back recollection, terror quickened her blood, and she struggled half erect. Strongbow smiled at the sudden mobility of her features. He had never seen the like on Snowfrid's flawless beauty, and then—a sudden throb of pity, perhaps something deeper, pierced the heart of the Jarl's son.

IF IT were love, this sudden tingling sensation that flashed along his spine he would not repel it! For, just to sit and watch that adorable, half-frightened, half-defiant beauty was worth all that he might pay. His was a race that was frank and sincere in its loves and hatreds. His people were swayed by impulse and caprice; analysis of emotion was beyond their ken. If a woman repelled Eric nothing could change his attitude. If he liked a man, his liking and trust would never waver. So was the recognition of this new feeling unhampered by the considerations that would have made realization slower, coming in modern days, when complexity of life and thought has supplanted the simplicity of those days.

A tree, with a sagging figure, sword in hand, lashed to its naked trunk, flashed before the Viking's vision, and unconsciously his hand gripped the hilt of his dagger. His whole being cried aloud for vengeance on Malachy, High-King of Ireland, and the killing of the King's daughter would be no more than equal atonement——

Once more he bent to stare at the Princess Eileen, and the knife clanged against the floor of the chariot. This thing that had come into his life, banishing thoughts of vengeance, was love! He knew that he loved her for her beauty, her helplessness, for a thousand reasons he could not name. With all the frank boldness of his Northern race he spoke freely in her own tongue, of why he had risked his life to capture her thus, and always he stared into her eyes, those eyes of a Valkyr, and was bewitched.

"It may not sound well to thee, King's daughter," he cried in a whirl of passion, "but I tell thee that I love thee, and may I rest forever in Nidhogge if I would not give my life to wed thee!"

"I hate thee, thou pagan wolf!" cried Eileen furiously; "thee and all thy race. 'Twould be a sad day for Ireland if ever her princess mated with one who brings but ruin upon her."

Eric's lips tightened as they did whene'er he was balked. Even now he felt ready to perform any deed in Eileen's service, to bend his knee in humble adoration before the daughter of the man he hated. But she scorned him, as any Irish princess would have scorned the ravagers of her sacred shores, even tho she could not remain unaware of his manly beauty and his mighty strength. Strongbow sent up a little prayer to propitiate the gods, and sat steadily watching her with his ice-blue eyes. And they thundered on thru the blackness of the night.

THE sun had already pushed his florid face over the horizon when wearied horses dragged them into the Viking camp. Thorgils the Thunderer, circlets of gold in his ears, armor burnished until it reflected the sun a millionfold, his long black beard brushed into wavy smoothness, was waiting when Strongbow leaped from the chariot, and with inbred grace, helped Eileen to the ground.

"So thou hast succeeded, Eric," he said softly, his eyes flaming with a lustful light. "Leave thou the maid with me."

The young Viking gripped the hilt of his sword. "With thee, Thorgils, and why should I leave her with thee? Is she not mine by right of arms? If I give her to thee, ever would the scalds sing of me as Eric Halfheart. Nay, Thunderer, things are not ordered thus."

Thorgils laughed, and so hearty was his mirth that his shoulders heaved like the sea in a storm. But such a sneer lurked by his lips that Eric crouched, tense as a bow string. As the other moved not, he relaxed and dropped his hand from his hilt, but his gaze never wandered from the Thunderer's brutal, bearded face.

"Come, Jarl's son. Remember, 'twas her father who slew thy kinsman. Can it be that thy oath means no more than that?" He swept his velvet cloak across his mailed chest with a gesture of infinite contempt.

"Whatever oath I may have made concerns not thee, Thorgils," broke in Strongbow hoarsely, "and, if thou cast a slight upon my honor, stand forth, and we shall see which is the better man."

The eyes of the Thunderer narrowed. "As Chief of this Viking band, I may not cross blades with thee in my own quarrel. I tell thee that I want this maid to wife. So fight the Berserker, Goll the One-Eyed, and if thou art the victor the maid is thine."

"Thou churl!" cried Strongbow bitterly, "Thou are afraid to risk thy person against me. The maid is mine whether thou sayest yea or nay. But I am not so thrall that I fear this Berserker. Time was when I scourged the thieving rascal from my tent. Bring him here, and may the runes of the scalds tell in time to come of thy baseness."

With a gesture of contempt, Eric flung off his armor and bared his knife. Eileen, white-faced, but retaining her haughty dignity with a control that was marvelous, whispered, "In the name of Thor save me from the hands of that man! For, if I must remain captive among ye Vikings, I would that thou wert my captor, tho——" and a flash of spirit warmed her pale cheeks—"I spare no love for thee."

There was a smile on the young Dane's lips, as he held up his dagger. Already this princess whom he had so quickly learned to love had lost her hate for him—and a still stronger feeling might replace her indifference if he but gave her time. "I swear by the hammer of Thor that the Thunderer shall have naught to do with thee."

His eyes met hers, and she, reading adoration in his glance, blushed and smiled and dropped her head.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH ERIC FOUGHT THE BERSERKER AND FOILED THE THUNDERER.

IN ALL of Denmark's vast possesions there was no man accounted Eric's equal in sword or knife play. Yet against the maddened fury of a Berserker he was hard put to keep Goll's dagger from his throat. Round and round each other they circled, searching for a vantage point. Goll's half-witted brain was tumbling and seething with angry passion. Since Eric had caught him stealing a huge silver goblet he had been the laughing-stock of his mates. It had grated on his savage nature until hatred for the yellow-haired chieftain grew unrestrained like the wild moss in Iceland. Add to that the Berserker's natural frenzy for fighting, and it made a vicious combination. Every instant the One-Eyed's rage increased, until the foam bubbled on his stiff beard, and with an unearthly scream he flung himself on Strongbow.

Never had the emerald isle of Ireland seen so furious a single combat; so wild was it that ever the hardened Vikings stared in pop-eyed amazement. And Eileen, the daughter of the High-King, her hands pressed to her bosom, stared and stared at the golden-haired hero who was risking his life for her. Pagan that he was, he was the most god-like man her maiden eyes had ever beheld, and in that, the moment of his peril, her heart went out to him.

Behind her, big hands clinching and unclinching with the battle lust, stood Rael, his breath hot upon her, muttering inarticulate advice beneath his breath. There was something of the wolf's wild affection for its cubs in his manner toward Eric, and unconscious that she was forswearing her hate for the young Viking, Eileen mentally applauded him for his devotion.

There came a new turn in the battle. Each had the wrist of the other's knife hand in a grip of steel. Tho Eric was the stronger man, the Berserker's insane fury instilled him with such might that, for a full ten minutes, they strained with cracking muscles, yet remained all but motionless. With a sudden jerk Goll tore loose his hand, and tho Strongbow gripped it almost instantly, a long streak of crimson welted the skin on the Viking's chest.

They recommenced the fell battle, but

instead of the taut anxiety that had pulled at Eric's lips, a smile loosened them. He felt the hairy body of the One-Eyed crumpling beneath the shock of repeated assaults; he sensed the fear that trembled in Goll's heart. The look of encouragement that Eileen flashed him freshened his younger, cleaner muscles, and he felt able to cope with all the world if she but remained his inspiration. Once he slipped, and the Berserker, gripping his courage fast, hurled all his waning strength into the combat, only to retreat, thanking the gods that he had escaped Strongbow's keen edge.

There was a whirling shower of dust, the gleam of two half-naked bodies in the air, and Goll came down upon his back with a crash that further jarred the little sense in his witless brain. Eric's dagger glittered before his eyes, and Eric's voice sounded threateningly in his buzzing ears.

"For Thor's sake, spare me!" gasped the One-Eyed, winching away from the knife. "Thou hast fairly downed me, Strongbow, and the maid is thine. May Hela have my carcass if thou art not the strongest man with whom I ever have traded hand grips."

Eric cleared his eyes of the salt sweat that blinded him, and sprang lightly to his feet, hale save for the ripped skin on his chest. He was supremely happy, for he had saved Eileen from the dishonor of the Thunderer's embrace. And if the Fate spinning out the futures of men were kind, it might help her think less hardly——

IN THAT moment he heard the King's daughter scream, Rael snarl forth an oath that choked in utterance, and the seamen roar merrily. With the bound of a wolf he was among them, and his keen eyes had taken in the situation.

Spluttering thru bleeding lips, Rael scrambled from the ground where Thorgils' blow had cast him, while Eileen struggled vainly to shield her face from the coarse, bearded lips of the Viking chief.

For an instant the world swam red before Strongbow's eyes, and his fingers, still wrapped about the hilt of his dagger, tightened convulsively. He hurled the heavy weapon thru the air. The point buried itself in the Thunderer's shoulder, and his arms dropped, perforce, from Eileen's body. Casting a frightened glance behind her, the girl fled.

Thorgils was a hard man, as were all the breed of Vikings. Without an exclamation of pain he tore the knife from his shoulder, and turned on Eric with a ghastly smile. "Thou shalt suffer for this," he croaked hoarsely. Without another word he fell to the greensward like a majestic oak, his helmet with its raven crest, rolling to Eric's feet.

A sudden hush fell upon the motley assemblage of invaders. In the moment of his comrades' stupefaction, Strongbow acted. With a bound he cleared the prostrate body of the Thunderer, and raced toward the chariot where Eileen was crouching. Rael, tho his head still buzzed from Thorgils' mighty blow, was close to his master's heels.

Strongbow's heart was heavy as he leaped into the chariot beside Eileen, and the Skraelling sent his horses into a thundering gallop. He was between two fires now—the outlawry that would be urged upon him if Thorgils so willed, and the vengeance that Malachy must exact for the insult to the dignity of his daughter. Of immediate pursuit Eric had little fear. One good might come from his death, and that would be the freeing of Snowfrid from a vow that had made but a mockery of her happiness. A bitter smile touched his features, then was gone and a tingling joy throbbed down his spine. Eileen had laid a hand on his naked shoulder.

"Thou art wounded," she said, pityingly.

Eric glanced down at the clotted gash on his chest, and laughed. "'Tis nothing, King's daughter. But I thank Thor for it, for it hast made thee notice me." His blue eyes softened as his gaze met hers.

She blushed and turned her head with the eternal coquetry of woman. "What wilt thou do with me now?" she asked, but showed no fear of what his answer might be.

"I will take thee back to thy father."

"To my father!" There was sheer astonishment in the girl's voice. "He will kill thee if ever thou art placed within his power."

Strongbow laughed again. "Then shall I sup in Valhalla, for thou shalt be with thy kinsfolk this very night. Do thou, Rael, leave us here, for I would not bring destruction upon thee."

"I am thy man, lord," answered the Viking without turning. "Where thou goest there go I, even tho it be to my death."

The Jarl's son fell silent, for the devotion of this man, who was a hard-bitten, pitiless ravager, struck very closely to his heart. And, too, he was warring a desperate question within his mind. He had sworn to avenge his brother's death; yet how could he carry out his oath without hurting deeply this princess he had come to love with all the hidden vigor of his northern nature? And what of Malachy's crown?

WHILE he thought, his eyes were fixed on the sheen of her hair, on the beautiful regularity of her features, the long, curving lines of her body. Was ever a maid so lovely? Snowfrid's cold beauty seemed dead beside this incarnation of life itself. His passion grew by leaps and bounds, and only the knowledge of her helplessness prevented him from seizing her in his arms. Tho it was an age when might was the only right he stayed his hand and touched her not. For hours they rode in silence thru the leafy temple of the woods, and the wonder of her grew and grew in Strongbow's heart until it had uprooted every other feeling.

Came the brassy blare of a trumpet, the clashing of armor, the deep voices of men. Strong hands flung back the horses upon their haunches. The woods were swarming with the warriors of the King. They caught sight of the ravens upon the Vikings' helmets, and closed upon them, shouting hoarsely.

"It ill befits one of my blood to die tamely," quoth Strongbow. "Farewell, Eileen, Princess of Ireland. May my love draw thee to me wherever it is the will of Odin that I go. Come, Rael. Bare is back without brother behind it, and thou art surely blood brother of mine." Grim as trapped wolves, the sea-kings stood back to back, fearlessly facing the angry flood that poured down upon them.

But the battle with the Berserker had sapped much of Eric's strength, and the jolting ride thru the forest had not mended it. Gallantly he fought, but scarce five minutes passed before a sword battered down his guard, and unconsciousness swept like a sable mantle over his memory.

You have been transported to another land, another age, another atmosphere—an atmosphere imposed by this tale of giant Vikings and hauberks and the clash of swords; here are great feasting-halls, where warriors drink from battered horns and sing of battle; here are princesses, beautiful beyond compare, and rough-hewn ships, and talk of the great god, Thor. Read next week of Eric's strange, virile, adventurings. He is as lion-hearted as the Richard of song and story.

Brain Fag.

"AS I WAS coming to town just now," said the motorist, "I saw a peculiar sight; a thin, wild-eyed man, clad in a red and blue bed quilt, perched in a treetop and every now and then crying 'Honk! Honk!' to the unbridled glee of a gang of men and boys assembled below."

"That was Luther K. Linkenhooper, by the symptoms," replied the landlord of the tavern at Grudge. "He accumulated three second-hand Hootin' Nanny cars; one he traded for, one his brother-in-law wished on him and one was left him by will. None of them was of any account, and so he set to work to take 'em all apart and make one good one out of the three.

The task was too much for his mind, and after he had made about five from the ruins of the three and still had a lot of stuff left, and none of 'em would move a muscle, he began to chatter, then to yell, and, finally took to his bed a-jibbering. Once in a while he escapes from his relatives and gets out and cuts some such caper as you saw. He thinks he is a Hootin' Nanny himself."

"But, great guns! Even a car of the name you mention does not wear a bed quilt and climb trees!"

"Mabby not. But it would if it was as crazy as Luther is."

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Crooked Trails and Straight

By William MacLeod Raine

The Previous Installment.

BOLT, the sheriff, told Curly he had been getting letters of an anonymous nature with ominous messages on them. Curly connected them with a little cigar store called the Jack of Hearts and run by

MRS. WYLIE. He discovered that she was the divorced wife of Lute Blackwell. Forcing an entrance into the cigar store, Curly and the friends of Luck Cullison discovered that Luck had been there—had left a newspaper in which he had underlined the important words needed to convey a message to his friends. It was evident that he had been taken away just before his rescuers arrived.

The scene shifted to the place where Cullison was being kept prisoner guarded by Blackwell. Cass Fendrick appeared and tried to get Luck to sign away all claims on his Del Oro homestead.

Fendrick, who was in love with Kate Cullison, went to her now and offered to take her to see her father. Once there, Cass forced Cullison to sign the papers by refusing to let Kate go until the concession was made.

The father and daughter returned home, the former determined to settle with his enemy sooner or later.

This story began in No. 22, the Ledger for May 29. Back copies may be obtained from our agents or newsdealers.

CHAPTER XXIV (Continued).

CULLISON was not the man to acknowledge himself defeated so long as there was a stone unturned. In the matter of the Del Oro homestead claim he moved at once. All of the county commissioners were personal friends of his, and he went to them with a plan for a new road to run across the Del Oro at the point where the canyon walls opened to a valley.

"What in Mexico is the good of a county road there, Luck? Can't run a wagon over them mountains and down to a river. Looks to me like it would be a road from nowhere to nowhere," Alec Flandreau protested, puzzled at his friend's request.

"I done guessed it," Yesler announced with a grin. "Run a county road thru and Cass Fendrick can't fence the river off from Luck's cows. Luck ain't aiming to run any wagon over the road."

The Map of Texas man got up and stamped with delight. "I get you. We'll learn Cass to take a joke, by gum! Luck sure gets a county road for his cows to amble over down to the river. Cass can have his darned old homestead now."

When Fendrick heard that the commissioners had condemned a right of way for a road thru his homestead he unloaded on the desert air a rich vocabulary. For here would have been a simple way out of his trouble if he had only thought of it. Instead of which he had melodramatically kidnaped his enemy and put himself within reach of the law and of Cullison's vengeance.

Nor did Luck confine his efforts to self-defense. He knew that to convict Fendrick of the robbery he must first lay hands upon Blackwell.

It was, however, Bucky that caught the convict. The two men met at the top of a mountain pass. Blackwell, headed south, was slipping down toward Stone's horse ranch when they came face to face. Before the bad man had his revolver out, he found himself looking down the barrel of the ranger's leveled rifle.

"I wouldn't," Bucky murmured genially.

"What you want me for?" Blackwell demanded sulkily.

"For the W. & S. robbery."

"I'm not the man you want. My name's Johnson."

"I'll put up with you till I find the man I do want, Mr. Johnson," Bucky told him cheerfully. "Climb down from that horse. No, I wouldn't try that. Keep your hands up."

With his prisoner in front of him, O'Connor turned townward. They jogged down out of the hills thru dark gulches and cactus-clad arroyos. The sharp catclaw caught at their legs. Tangled mesquite and ironwood made progress slow. They reached in time Apache Desert, and here Bucky camped. He hobbled his prisoner's feet and put around his neck a rope, the other end of which was tied to his own waist. Then he built a small fire of greasewood and made coffee for them both. The prisoner slept, but his captor did not. For he could take no chances of an escape.

The outlines of the mountain ranges loomed shadowy and dim on both sides. The moonlight played strange tricks with the mesquite and the giant cactus, a grove of which gave to the place an awesome aspect of some ghostly burial ground of a long vanished tribe.

Next day they reached Saguache. Bucky took his prisoner straight to the ranger's office and telephoned to Cullison.

"Don't I get anything to eat?" growled the convict while they waited.

"When I'm ready."

Bucky believed in fair play. The man had not eaten since last night. But then neither had he. It happened that Bucky was tough as whipcord, as supple and untiring as a hickory sapling. Well, Blackwell was a pretty hard nut to crack, too. The lieutenant did not know anything about book psychology, but he had observed that hunger and weariness try out the stuff that is in a man. Under the sag of them many a will snaps that would have held fast if sustained by a good dinner and a sound night's sleep. This is why so many "bad men," gun fighters with a reputation for gameness, wilt on occasion like whipped curs. In the old days this came to nearly every terror of the border. Some day when he had a jumping toothache, or when his nerves were frayed from a debauch, a silent stranger walked into his presence, looked long and steadily into his eyes, and ended forever his reign of lawlessness. Sometimes the two-gun man was "planted," sometimes he subsided into innocuous peace henceforth.

The ranger had a shrewd instinct that the hour had come to batter down this fellow's dogged resistance. Therefore he sent for Cullison, the man whom the convict most feared.

The very look of the cattleman, with that grim, hard, capable aspect, shook Blackwell's nerve.

"So you've got him, Bucky."

LUCK looked the man over as he sat handcuffed beside the table and read in his face both terror and a sly, dogged cunning. Once before the fellow had been put thru the third degree. Something of the sort he fearfully expected now. Villainy is usually not consistent. This hulking bully should have been a hardy ruffian. Instead he shrank like a schoolgirl from the thought of physical pain.

"Stand up," ordered Cullison quietly.

Blackwell got to his feet at once. He could not help it, even tho the fear in his eyes showed that he cowered before the anticipated attack.

"Don't hit me," he whined.

Luck knew the man sweated under the punishment his imagination called up, and he understood human nature too well to end the suspense by making real the vision. For then the worst would be past, since the actual is never equal to what is expected.

"Well?" Luck watched him with the look of tempered steel in his hard eyes.

The convict flinched, moistened his lips with his tongue, and spoke at last.

"I—I—Mr. Cullison, I want to explain. Every man is liable to make a mistake—go off half-cocked. I didn't do right. That's a fac'. I can explain all that, but I'm sick now—awful sick."

Cullison laughed harshly. "You'll be sicker soon."

"You promised you wouldn't do anything if we turned you loose," the man plucked up courage to remind him.

"I promised the law wouldn't do anything. You'll understand the distinction presently."

"Mr. Cullison, please—— I admit I done wrong. I hadn't ought to have gone in with Cass Fendrick. He wanted me to kill you, but I wouldn't."

With that unwinking gaze the ranchman beat down his lies, while fear dripped in perspiration from the pallid face of the prisoner.

Bucky had let Cullison take the center of the stage. He had observed a growdistress mount and ride the victim. Now he stepped in to save the man with an alternative at which Blackwell might be expected not to snatch eagerly perhaps, but at least to be driven toward.

"This man is my prisoner, Mr. Cullison. From what I can make out you ought to strip his hide off and hang it up to dry. But I've got first call on him. If he comes thru with the truth about the W. & S. Express robbery, I've got to protect him."

Luck understood the ranger. They were both working toward the same end. The immediate punishment of this criminal was not the important issue. It was merely a club with which to beat him into submission, and at that a moral rather than a physical one. But the owner of the Circle C knew better than to yield to Bucky too easily. He fought the point out with him at length, and finally yielded reluctantly, in such a way as to aggravate rather than relieve the anxiety of the convict.

"All right. You take him first," he finally conceded harshly.

Bucky kept up the comedy. "I'll take him, Mr. Cullison. But if he tells me the truth—and if I find out it's the whole truth—thre'll be nothing doing on your part. He's my prisoner. Understand that."

Metaphorically, Blackwell licked the hand of his protector. He was still standing, but his attitude gave the effect of crouching.

"I aim to do what's right, Captain O'Connor. Whatever's right. You ask me any questions."

"I want to know all about the W. & S. robbery, everything, from start to finish."

"Honest, I wish I could tell you. But I don't know a thing about it. Cross my heart, I don't."

"No use, Blackwell. If I'm going to stand by you against Mr. Cullison, you'll have to tell the truth. Why, man, I've even got the mask you wore and the cloth you cut it from."

"I reckon it must a-been some one else, Major. Wisht I could help you, but I can't."

Bucky arose. "All right. If you can't help me, I can't help you. Apparently he dismissed the matter from his mind, for he looked at his watch and turned to the cattleman. "Mr. Cullison, I reckon I'll run out and have some supper. Do you mind staying here with this man till I get back?"

"No. That's all right, Bucky. Don't hurry. I'l keep him entertained." Perhaps it was not by chance that his eye wandered to a blacksnake whip hanging on the wall.

O'Connor sauntered to the door. The frightened gaze of the prisoner clung to him as if for safety.

"Major—Colonel—you ain't a-going," he pleaded.

"Only for an hour or two. I'll be

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back. I wouldn't think of saying good-by—not till we reach Yuma."

With that the door closed behind him. Blackwell cried out, hurriedly, eagerly. "Mister O'Connor!"

BUCKY'S head reappeared. What! Have you reduced me to the ranks already? I was looking to be a general by the time I got back," he complained whimsically.

"I—I'll tell you everything—every last thing. Mr. Cullison—he's aiming to kill me soon as you've gone."

"I've got no time to fool away, Blackwell. I'm hungry. If you mean business get to it. But remember that whatever you say will be used against you."

"I'll tell you any dog-goned thing you want to know. You've got me beat. I'm plumb worn out—sick. A man can't stand everything."

O'Connor came in and closed the door. "Let's have it, then—the whole story. I want it all; how you came to know about this shipment of money, how you pulled it off, what you have done with it, all the facts from beginning to the end."

"Lemme sit down, Captain. I'm awful done up. I reckon while I was in the hills I've been underfed."

"Sit down. There's a good dinner waiting for you at Clune's when you get thru."

Even then, tho he must have known that lies could not avail, the man sprinkled his story with them. The residuum of truth that remained after these had been sifted out was something like this.

He had found on the street a letter that had inadvertently been dropped. It was to Jordan of the Cattlemen's National Bank, and it notified him that $20,000 was to be shipped to him by the W. & S. Express Company on the night of the robbery. Blackwell resolved to have a try for it. He hung around the office until the manager and the guard arrived from the train, made his raid upon them, locked the door, and threw away his mask. He dived with the satchel into the nearest alley, and came face to face with the stranger whom he later learned to be Fendrick. The whole story of the horse had been a myth later invented by the sheepman to scatter the pursuit by making it appear that the robber had come from a distance. As the street had been quite deserted at the time this detail could be plausibly introduced with no chance of a denial.

Fendrick, who had heard the shouting of the men locked in the express office, stopped the robber, but Blackwell broke away and ran down the alley. The sheepman followed and caught him. After another scuffle the convict again hammered himself free, but left behind the hand satchel containing the spoils. Fendrick (so he later explained to Blackwell) tied a cord to the handle of the bag and dropped it down the chute of a laundry in such a way that it could later be drawn up. Then he hurried back to the express office and released the prisoners. After the excitement had subsided, he had returned for the money and hid it. The original robber did not know where.

Blackwell's second meeting with the sheepman had been almost as startling as the first. Cass had run into the Jack of Hearts in time to save the life of his enemy. The two men recognized each other and entered into a compact to abduct Cullison, for his share in which the older man was paid one thousand dollars. The Mexican Dominguez had later appeared on the scene, had helped guard the owner of the Circle C, and had assisted in taking him to the hut in the Rincons where he had been secreted.

Both men asked the same question as soon as he had finished.

"Where is the money you got from the raid on the W. & S. office?"

"Don't know. I've been at Fendrick ever since to tell me. He's got it salted somewhere. You're fixing to put me behind the bars, and he's the man that really stole it."

From this they could not shake him. He stuck to it vindictively, for plainly his malice against the sheepman was great. The latter had spoiled his coup, robbed him of its fruits, and now was letting him go to prison.

"I reckon we'd better have a talk with Cass," Bucky suggested in a low voice to the former sheriff.

Luck laughed significantly. "When we find him."

For the sheepman had got out on bail the morning after his arrest.

"We'll find him easily enough. And I rather think he'll have a good explanation, even if this fellow's story is true."

"Oh, he'll be loaded with explanations. I don't doubt that for a minute. But it will take a hell of a lot of talk to get away from the facts. I've got him where I want him now, and by God! I'll make him squeal before the finish."

"Oh, well, you're prejudiced," Bucky told him with an amiable smile.

"Course I am; prejudiced as old wall-eyed Rogers was against the vigilantes for hanging him on account of horse stealing. But I'll back my prejudices all the same. We'll see I'm right, Bucky."

CHAPTER XXV.

BOB TAKES A HAND.

FENDRICK, riding on Mesa Verde, met Bob Cullison, and before he knew what had happened found a gun thrown on him.

"Don't you move," the boy warned.

"What does this tommyrot mean?" the sheepman demanded angrily.

"It means that you are coming back with me to the ranch. That's what it means."

"What for?"

"Never you mind what for."

"Oh, go to Mexico," Cass flung back impatiently. "Think we're in some fool moving-picture play, you blamed young idiot? Put up that gun."

Shrilly Bob retorted. He was excited enough to be dangerous. "Dont' you get the wrong idea. I'm going to make this stick. You'll turn and go back with me to the Circle C."

"And you'll travel to Yuma first thing you know, you young Jesse James. What you need is a pair of leather chaps applied to your hide."

"You'll go home with me, just the same."

"You've got one more guess coming, kid. I'll not go without knowing why."

"You're wanted for the W. & S. Express robbery. Blackwell has confesed."

"Confess that I did it?" Fendrick inquired scornfully.

"Says you were in it with him. I ain't a-going to discuss it with you. Swing that horse round, and don't make any breaks, or there'll be mourning at the C. F. ranch."

Cass sat immovable as the sphinx. He was thinking that he might as well face the charge now as any time. Moreover, he had reasons for wanting to visit the Circle C. They had to do with a tall, slim girl who never looked at him without scorn in her dark, flashing eyes.

"All right. I'll go back with you, but not under a gun."

"You'll go the way I say."

"Don't think it; I've said I'll go. That settles it. But I won't stand for any gunplay capture."

"You'll have to stand for it."

Fendrick's face set. "Will I? It's up to you, then. Let's see you make me."

Sitting there with his gaze steadily on the boy, Cass had Bob at a disadvantage. If the sheep owner had tried to break away into the chaparral, Bob could have blazed away at him, but he could not shoot a man looking at him with cynical, amused eyes. He could understand the point of view of his adversary. If Fendrick rode into the Circle C under compulsion of a gun in the hands of a boy he would never hear the end of the laugh on him.

"You won't try to light out, will you?"

"I've got no notion of lighting out."

Bob put up his big blue gun reluctantly. Never before had it been trained on a human being, and it was a wrench to give up the thought of bringing in the enemy as a prisoner. But he saw he could not pull it off. Fendrick had declined to scare, had practically laughed him out of it. The boy had not meant his command as a bluff, but Cass knew him better than he did himself.

They turned toward the Circle C.

"Must have been taking lessons on how to bend a gun. You in training for sheriff, or are you going to take Bucky's place with the rangers?" Fendrick asked with casual impudence, malicious amusement gleaming from his lazy eyes.

Bob, very red about the ears, took refuge in sulky silence. He was being guyed, and not by an inch did he propose to compromise the Cullison dignity.

"From the way you go at it, I figure you an old hand at the hold-up game. Wonder if you didn't pull off the W. & S. raid youself."

Bob writhed impotently. At this sort of thing he was no match for the other Fendrick, now in the best of humors, planted lazily his offhand barbs.

Kate was seated on the porch sewing. She rose in surprise when her cousin and the sheepman appeared. They came with jingling spurs across the plaza toward her. Bob was red as a turkeycock, but Fendrick wore his most devil-may-care insouciance.

"Where's Uncle Luck, sis? I've brought this fellow back with me. Caught him on the mesa," explained the boy sulkily.

Fendrick bowed rather extravagantly and flashed at the girl a smiling double row of strong white teeth. "He's qualifying for a moving-picture show actor, Miss Cullison. I hadn't the heart to disappoint him when he got that cannon trained on me. So here I am."

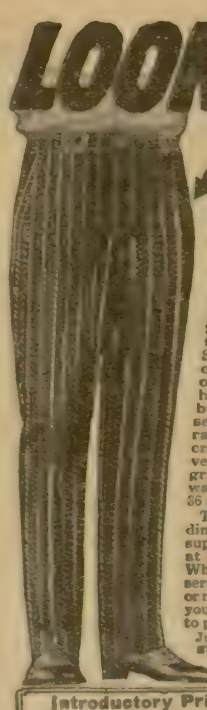
Kate looked at him and then let her gaze travel to her cousin. She somehow gave the effect of judging him of negligible value.

"I think he's in his office, Bob. I'll go see."

She went swiftly and presently her father came out. Kate did not return.

Luck looked straight at Cass with the uncompromising hostility so character-

(Continued on Page 13.)



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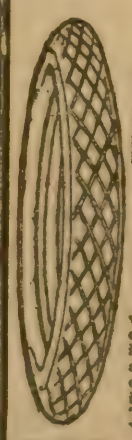

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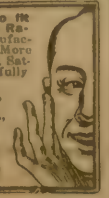

THIN ICE

(Continued From Page 4)

with my mother and see if she will help us."

"And if she can't?"

She placed her arms about his neck and her voice was very low—it was even sad.

"Then I will go with you."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VOICE OF RUMOR.

IT WAS true. Powers had arrived in town. But the report that he and Gilmore were drunk was partly exaggerated. They were seen together in various cafes, and from their actions and parts of speech, as reported to him, Dr. Hallam suspected they were planning mischief, and that Powers was finding a dangerous informer and a ready tool in the person of Gilmore.

Riding into camp towards the close of day, he encountered Powers on the street. Powers was effusive and affable. He had meant, he said, to look Hamilton up, and he volunteered the statement that he was not in any way offended at Dr. Hallam for refusing to loan the money he had asked for. Dr. Hallam was not deceived, nor was he left long in doubt respecting his true state of mind, for Powers, in his easy, hale-fellow sort of way, worked around to their meeting in Portland and reverted to the supposed death of Hedric Hallam in an apparently careless way.

"It is strange," he finally said, "how the suspicion arose that you knew something about it. But I put an end to that."

"That was good of you," Dr. Hallam answered, "altho it would have amounted to nothing. Do I really look like the man who died there?"

Powers glanced keenly at him.

"As two peas in a pod. To be frank with you, some one did start a rumor that the dead man was not Harry Hamilton, and one man"—he watched Dr. Hallam very closely—"one man says that he saw the two of you together that morning."

To use Dr. Hallam's expression, Powers might have misled him if he had not slipped a cog when he used the word morning. Dr. Hallam knew then that he was relying upon a shrewd guess, so the first thrill of alarm was turned into an easy laugh of indifference.

"I would have liked to see the man," he said. "I mean the dead man. But as to my being in Eugene—that was impossible. Does any one seriously think so?"

"I believe the sheriff does. And, by the way, I understand you have sold your property here for a large sum of money."

"I have, and I have found a place to invest all of it."

"I am glad to hear that. I am expecting a telegram almost hourly, and if I should get into a tight place you will give me a little help, won't you?"

"I am sorry, Mr. Powers, but I cannot."

Dr. Hallam looked straight into his eyes. In some indefinable way Powers was made to understand the answer was irrevocable. He flushed and looked displeased—almost sullen.

"I think you ought to," he said. "I saved you a lot of trouble by keeping those absurd suspicions from annoying you, and a breath of them here in this town, you know, would simply undo you. I will go even farther and say that it has been told me you spent the greater part of the three years you were away in the Washington penitentiary. Now ——"

Dr. Hallam drew himself erect. "That is enough," he said. "We will not discuss it. Good day."

He deliberately turned and walked away, leaving Powers angry and alone, the center of critical eyes. Ben Gilmore laughed aloud as Dr. Hallam swung himself into the saddle. He laughed at the expression on Powers' face. Dr. Hallam thought Gilmore was taunting him, as he was in the habit of doing. His face flushed, and for a moment he felt the cold, deadly anger of a man on the point of retaliation. Only his supreme, admirable mastery of self prevented him from turning back.

WITH glaring eyes Powers went to the watching men. "The d——d jail bird!" he exploded. "With a little money in his pocket he is acting as tho he were spotless as snow."

"Honestly, Judge, has he been in jail?" asked Gilmore in a wheedling tone.

Powers restrained the hot words which flew to his lips. "I'll tell you later," he replied after a moment of silence. "But if he hasn't he is likely to be very soon."

Gilmore laughed boisterously. "I been trying to git a raise out of him for a long time, but he is afraid. I used to be Henry's friend when he was a man. Now I just want to punch his pretty face."

"I hope you will," said Powers. "And tear his clothes off. See if there is a large birthmark on his left breast."

"Well, there ain't. I can tell you that now. I been swimmin' with him often and there ain't no kind of a mark on his breast."

"You mean you have been swimming with Henry Hamilton—not with that man."

There was a moment of silence. The men looked at each other questioningly, in speechless surprise.

"What do you mean?" asked one of them.

Powers shrugged his shoulders. "Nothing," he said, with a constrained smile. "Let's go to the hotel."

As they entered the hotel Dr. Hallam passed from the outskirts of the town, conscious that because of the words and actions of Powers the populace was alert for the startling information he had hinted at.

Having predetermined his conduct, Powers was proceeding along methodical lines—first to frighten Dr. Hallam, to convince him that he knew enough to bring about his ruin, then compel him to face it, or else divide what he called the "loot."

Unfortunately for Dr. Hallam, business had taken Powers to Eugene before Henry Hamilton was buried, and he had there seen the body of the man supposed to be Dr. Hedric Hallam. Being logical as well as perceptive, he did not believe the coarse, unrefined features of the dead belonged to one who had ever been sufficiently intelligent, to make a fair success in the practice of medicine. Associating that suspicion with Dr. Hallam, he intuitively sensed the possibilities of an exchanged identity made somewhat imperative and most likely to occur because of Dr. Hallam's peculiar position as a fugitive with a strong incentive to be considered dead.

An alert mind inflamed by curiosity led him to investigate into the past life of Dr. Hallam. It caused him even to extend his investigations into the doctor's old home in Kentucky. From that source he learned that Dr. Hallam had a flaming red birthmark upon his left breast. The discovery gave him a sense of almost certainty that an exchange of identities had been effected. But he was not sure. He could never be sure unless he saw the breast of Dr. Hallam—or that of the dead man already buried in the earth. The latter was impossible. He could find no logical excuse for disinterring it without disclosing his discovery and his suspicions, and for personal reasons he wished them to remain his exclusive property. Nor could he think of any way to expose the breast of the then existing Henry Hamilton.

During the course of his investigations he also learned that Henry Hamilton had served a term in prison. That information, he thought, would be of service to him later on. Believing, for the present, that Dr. Hallam was impersonating the dead man, and that he had the proceeds from the sale of property belonging to the Hamilton estate, stored in his cabin, he believed himself schemer enough to get his hands upon the biggest portion of it.

MOST of his suspicions he insinuated to Dr. Hallam's enemies with so much of mystery and success, many believed Dr. Hallam both dangerous and criminally inclined. Pap Maynard especially was impressed with that belief. He carried it home with him. In the picture which he drew for his wife and daughter to look upon, he painted Hamilton in the dark, somber colors of an unprincipled scoundrel. His story effectively swept away all the progress Nancy had made with her mother. Listening with angry indignation to her father's strictures, her loyalty suffered in silence until he came to the end of the story, until he asserted that Hamilton had been in prison and hinted at more disgraceful disclosures to come—then she was stung into speech.

"I do not believe it," she cried. "Powers is trying to blackmail him."

Maynard turned to her in glaring surprise. "What do you know about it?" he shouted.

"I know because he told me," she answered with spirit.

"He told you? Who?"

"Henry."

"Henry!" gasped Maynard.

"Yes, Henry. I told him what Powers was telling about him and he says that Powers wanted to borrow $5,000 and because he could not get it, he is trying to blackmail and ruin him. So now you know the truth."

"Yes," replied Maynard with a stern face, "I know the truth. I know that you have been meeting that hound, and I know if he don't leave you alone I'll kill him!"

"He is not a hound. He is a straightforward, honest man. All of you are prejudiced, and you in particular are unable to do him justice."

Mrs. Maynard arose with a flutter of alarm and sought by signals to check Nancy's intemperate speech.

"Well, you are," cried Nancy, and turned to her with increased emphasis. "I know Henry better than you do, and I know that he has not been in prison."

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"And I suppose you want to marry him," said Maynard, with ominous calm.

"I am going to."

"You go to your room!"

"I will not. And since you force me I may as well tell you what I have been thinking. I am over 19 and I can choose for myself. And what is more, you are not my father to make me do as you please."

Maynard's face flamed with passion. Grasping her by the shoulders he forced her out of the room. She resisted; then he slapped her in the face.

"Oh, don't, don't!" cried Mrs. Maynard.

She rushed forward and seized her husband by the arm. Maynard pushed her back, and still forcing Nancy in front of him, he pressed her across the hallway into her own room and locked the door.

Nancy, paying a penalty of love, sat down in a chair and wept tears of grief and shame. Rebellion raged within her. From depths of humiliated pride she kept repeating to herself that she would marry Henry Hamilton, that she would run away with him, that she would never, never again suffer a blow from a man. In the end she was firmly convinced there was no other course left to her than to elope.

Without even knowing the true name of the man she has promised to marry, Nance Maynard has determined to elope with him against the wishes of her father and mother. Will Hallam risk losing her love by telling her that he has been acting a lie all this time or will he choose to keep up the part he has undertaken to play thruout a life of deceit and entanglement? The concluding chapters of this serial, in the next Ledger, depict the doctor in the most crucial situation of his adventuresome life.

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Just how to use his adz.

He is a plane man, this we know;
A joiner we recall;
And tho he spends some cash for beard
He does not lose his awl.

No barber has to fix his locks,
Whose speech comes forth in gales;
He never has a pretty girl
To manicure his nails.

A Correction.

MURIEL, aged 4, was taken by her governess to have her tea with an aunt. Presently she began to eat a piece of very rich cake.

"Oh, I just love this chocolate cake!" she exclaimed. "It's awfully nice!"

"Muriel, dear," corrected her governess, "it is wrong to say you 'love' cake, and I've frequently pointed out that 'just' is wrongly used in such a sentence. Again 'awfully' is quite wrong. 'Very' would be more correct, dear. Now repeat your remark, please."

Muriel obediently repeated:

"I like chocolate cake; it is very good."

"That's better, dear," said the governess, approvingly.

'But it sounds as if I was talking about bread," protested the little girl.

Crooked Trails and Straight

(Continued From Page 11)

istic of him. Neither of the men spoke. It was Bob who made the necessary explanations. The sheepman heard them with a polite derision that suggested an impersonal amusement at the situation.

"I've been looking for you," Luck said bluntly, after his nephew had finished. "So I gathered from young Jesse James. He intimated it over the long blue barrel of his cannon. Anything particular, or just a pleasant social call?"

"You're in bad on this W. & S. robbery. I reckoned you would be safer in jail till it's cleared up."

"You still sheriff, Mr. Cullison? Somehow I had got a notion you had quit the job."

"I'm an interested party. There's new evidence, not manufactured, either."

"Well, well!"

"We'll take the stage into town and see what O'Connor says—that is, if you've got time to go." Luck could be as formal in his sarcasm as his neighbor.

"With such good company on the way I'll have to make time."

The stage did not usually leave till about half past one. presently Kate announced dinner. A little awkwardly Luck invited the sheepman to join them. Fendrick declined. He was a Fletcherite, he informed Cullison ironically, and was in the habit of missing meals occasionally. This would be one of the times.

His host hung in the doorway. Seldom at a loss to express himself, he did not quite know how to put into words what he was thinking. His enemy understood.

"That's all right. You've satisfied the demands of hospitality. Go eat your dinner. I'll be right here on the porch when you get thru."

Kate, who was standing beside her father, spoke quietly.

"There's a place for you, Mr. Fendrick. We should be very pleased to have you join us. People who happen to be at the Circle C at dinner time are expected to eat here."

"Come and eat, man. You'll be under no obligations. I reckon you can hate us just as thoro after a square meal as before. Besides, I was your guest for several days."

Fendrick looked at the young mistress of the ranch. He meant to decline once more, but unaccountably found himself accepting instead. Something in her face told him she would rather have it so.

Wherefore Cass found himself with his feet under the table of his foe discussing various topics that had nothing to do with sheep, homestead claims, abductions, or express robberies. He looked at Kate but rarely, yet he was aware of her all the time. At his ranch a Mexican did the cooking in haphazard fashion. The food was ill prepared and worse served. He ate only because it was a necessity, and he made as short a business of it as he could. Here were cut roses on a snowy tablecloth, an air of leisure that implied the object of dinner to be something more than to devour a given quantity of food. Moreover, the food had a flavor that made it palatable. The rib roast was done to a turn, the mashed potatoes whipped to a flaky lightness. The vegetable salad was a triumph, and the rice custard melted in his mouth.

Presently a young man came into the dining-room and sat down beside Kate. He looked the least in the world surprised at the sight of the sheepman.

"Mornin', Cass," he nodded.

"Morning, Curly," answered Fendrick. "Didn't know you were riding for the Circle C."

"He's my foreman," Luck explained.

Cass observed that he was quite one of the family. Bob admired him openly and without shame, because he was the best rider in Arizona; Kate seemed to be on the best of terms with him, and Luck treated him with the offhand bluffness he might have used toward a grown son.

If Cass had, in his bitter, sardonic fashion, been interested in Kate before he sat down, the feeling had quickened to something different before he rose. It was not only that she was competent to devise such a meal in the desert. There was something else. She had made a home for her father and cousin at the Circle C. The place radiated love, domesticity, kindly good fellowship. The casual give and take of the friendly talk went straight to the heart of the sheepman. This was living. It came to him poignantly that in his scramble for wealth he had missed that which was of far greater importance.

The stage brought the two men to town shortly after sundown. Luck called up O'Connor, and made an appointment to meet him after supper.

"Back again, Bucky," Fendrick grinned at sight of the ranger. "I hear I'm suspected of being a bad hold-up."

"There's a matter that needs explaining, Cass. According to Blackwell's story, you caught him with the goods at the time of the robbery, and in making his get-away he left the loot with you. What have you done with it?"

"Blackwell told you that, did he?"

"Yes."

"Don't doubt your word for a moment, Bucky, but before I do any talking I'd like to hear him say so. I'll not round on him until I know he's given himself away."

THE convict was sent for. He substantiated the ranger reluctantly. He was so hemmed in that he did not know how to play his cards so as to make the most of them. He hated Fendrick. But much as he desired to convict him, he could not escape an uneasy feeling that he was going to be made the victim. For Cass took it with that sarcastic smile of his that mocked them all in turn. The convict trusted none of them. Already he felt the penitentiary walls closing on him. He was like a trapped coyote, ready to snarl and bite at the first hand he could reach. Just now this happened to belong to Fendrick, who had cheated him out of the money he had stolen and had brought this upon him.

Cass heard him out with a lifted upper lip and his most somnolent tiger-cat expression. After Blackwell had finished and been withdrawn from circulation he rolled and lit a cigarette.

"By Mr. Blackwell's say-so I'm the goat. By the way, has it ever occured to you gentlemen that one can't be convicted on the testimony of a single accomplice?" He asked it casually, his chair tipped back, smoke wreaths drifting lazily ceilingward.

"We've got a little circumstantial evidence to add, Cass," Bucky suggested pleasantly.

"Not enough—not nearly enough."

"That will be for a jury to decide." Cullison chipped in.

Fendrick shrugged. "I've a notion to let it go to that. But what's the use? Understand this. I wasn't going to give Blackwell away, but since he has talked, I may tell what I know. It's true enough what he says. I did relieve him of the plunder."

"Sorry to hear that, Cass," Bucky commented gravely. "What did you do with it?"

The sheep owner flicked his cigarette ash into the tray, and looked at the lieutenant out of half-shuttered, indolent eyes. "Gave it to you, Bucky."

"O'Connor sat up. His blue Irish eyes were dancing. "You're a cool customer, Cass."

"Fact, just the same. Got that letter I handed you the other day?"

The officer produced it from his safe. "Open it."

With a paper knife Bucky ripped the flap and took out a sheet of paper.

"There's something else in there," Fendrick suggested.

The something else proved to be a piece of paper folded tightly, which being opened disclosed a key.

O'Connor read aloud the letter:

To Nicholas Bolt, Sheriff, or Bucky O'Connor, Lieutenant of Rangers:
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This $10 Officer Shoe

Hand sewed, first grade factory, cut down price. Direct to you at only $6.85

Made of the best Waterproof Mahogany calf leather. If these shoes are not just as we say, send them back. You do not lose a cent. Store price of this shoe is $10.00. Built for work and dress at the same time. If you are sending money order or check, do not include postage. Pay only for shoes. We pay postage.

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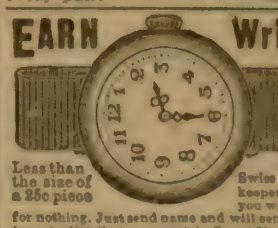

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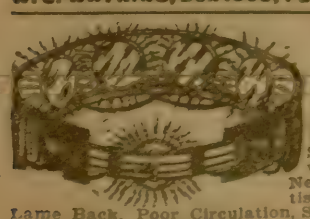

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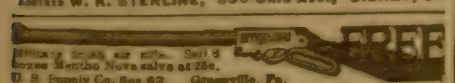

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Be a Detective Excellent opportunity, good pay, travel. Write E. T. Ludwig, 120 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

a little valise which is not mine, I am getting rid of it in the following manner: I have rented a large safety-deposit box at the Cattlemen's National Bank, and have put into it the valise with the lock still unbroken. The key is inclosed herewith. Shaw, the cashier, will tell you that when this box was rented I gave explicit orders it should be opened only by the men whose names are given in an envelope left with him, not even excepting myself. The valise was deposited at exactly 10:30 a. m. the morning after the robbery, as Mr. Shaw will also testify. I am writing this the evening of the same day.

CASS FENDRICK.

"Don't believe a word of it," Cullison exploded.

"Seeing is believing," the sheepman murmured. He was enjoying greatly the discomfiture of his foe.

"Makes a likely fairy tale. What for would you keep the money and not turn it back?"

"That's an easy one, Luck. He wanted to throw the burden of the robbery on you," Bucky explained.

"Well, I got to be shown."

In the morning he was shown. Shaw confirmed exactly what Fendrick had said. He produced a sealed envelope. Within this was a sheet of paper, upon which were written two lines.

Box 2143 is to be opened only by Sheriff Bolt or Lieut. Bucky O'Connor of the Rangers, and before witnesses.

CASS FENDRICK.

From the safety-deposit vault Bucky drew a large package wrapped in yellow paper. He cut the string, tore away the covering, and disclosed a leather satchel. Perry Hawley, the local manager of the Western & Southern Express Company, fitted to this a key and took out a sealed bundle. This he ripped open before them all. Inside was found the sum of twenty thousand dollars in crisp new bills.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A CLEAN UP.

A SLIGHT accident occurred at the jail, one so unimportant that Scanlan the jailer did not think it worth reporting it to his chief. Blackwell, while eating, knocked a glass from the table and broke it on the cement floor of his cell. There is a legend to the effect that for want of a nail a battle was lost. By reason of a bit of glass secreted in his bed something quite as important happened to the convict.

From the little table in his room he pried loose one of the corner braces. At night he scraped away at this with his bit of glass until the wood began to take the shape of a revolver. This he carefully blacked with the ink brought him by his guard. To the end of his weapon he fitted an iron washer taken from the bedstead. Then he waited for his opportunity.

His chance came thru the good nature of Scanlan. The jailer was in the habit of going down town to loaf for an hour or two with old cronies after he had locked up for the night. Blackwell pretended to be out of chewing tobacco and asked the guard to buy him some. About 10 o'clock Scanlan returned and brought the tobacco to his prisoner. The moon was shining brightly, and he did not bring a lantern with him. As he passed the plug thru the grating Blackwell's fingers closed around his wrist and drew the man close to the iron lattice work. Simultaneously a cold rim was pressed against the temple of the guard.

"Don't move, or I'll fill you full of holes," the convict warned.

Scanlan did not move, not until the man in the cell gave the word. Then he obeyed orders to the letter. His right hand found the bunch of keys, fitted the correct one to the door, and unlocked it according to instructions. Not until he was relieved of his weapon did Blackwell release him. The jailer was backed into the cell, gagged with a piece of torn bedding, and left locked up as securely as the other had been a few minutes earlier.

The convict made his way downstairs, opened the outer door with the bunch of keys he had taken from Scanlan, locked it behind him, and slipped into the first alley that offered refuge. By way of the Mexican quarters he reached the suburbs and open country. Two hours later he stole a horse from an irrigated ranch near town. Within twenty-four hours he had reached the Soapy Stone horse ranch and safety.

After this the plans for the raid on the Texas, Arizona & Pacific Flyer moved swiftly to a head. Soapy Stone and Sam dropped into Saguache inconspicuously one evening. Next day Stone rode down to Tin Cup to look over the ground. Maloney telephoned their movements to the Circle C and to the Hashknife. This brought to Saguache Luck Cullison, Curly Flandrau and Slats Davis. Bucky O'Connor had been called to Douglas on important business and could not lend his help.

Curly met Sam in front of Chalkeye's Place. They did the town together in a mild fashion and Flandrau proposed that they save money by taking a common room. To this young Cullison agreed.

Luck, Curly and Dick Maloney had already ridden over the country surrounding the scene of the projected hold-up. They had decided that the robbery would probably take place at the depot, so that the outlaws could get the agent to stop the Flyer without arousing suspicion. In a pocket of the hills back of the station a camp had been selected, its site well back from any trail and so situated that from it one could command a view of Tin Cup.

The owner of the Circle C selected three of his close-mouthed riders—Sweeney, Jake and Buck were the ones he chose—to hold the camp with him until after the robbery. The only signal they needed was the stopping of the flyer at Tin Cup. Then they would come pounding down from the hills in time to catch the robbers before they had got thru with their work. Maloney or Curly would be on the train to take a hand in the battle. Caught by surprise, Soapy's gang would surely be trapped.

So they planned it, but it happened that Soapy Stone had made his arrangements differently.

Luck and his riders took their blankets and their traps down to Tin Cup according to agreement, while Davis, Maloney and Flandrau looked after the Saguache end of the business. All of them were very friendly with Sam. The boy, younger than any of them, was flattered that three of the best known riders of the territory should make so much of him. Moreover, Stone had given him instructions to mix with Curly's crowd as much as he could. He had given as a reason that it would divert suspicion, but what he really wanted was to throw the blame of the hold-up on these friends after Sam was found dead on the scene.

YOUNG CULLISON had stopped drinking, but he could not keep his nerves from jumping. His companions pretended not to notice how worried he was, but they watched him so closely that he was never out of sight of at least one of them. Soapy had decreed the boy's death by treachery, but his friends were determined to save him and to end forever the reign of Stone as a bad man.

It was one day when the four young cowpunchers were sitting together in Curly's room playing poker that a special delivery letter came to Sam. The others, to cover their excitement, started an argument as to whether five aces (they were playing with the joker) beat a straight flush. Presently Sam spoke, as indifferently as he could.

"Got the offer of a job down the line. Think I'll run down tonight far as Casa Grande and see what's doing."

"If they need any extra riders here's some more out of a job," Dick told him.

"Heard today of a freighter that wants a mule-skinner. I'm going to see him tomorrow," Slats chipped in.

"Darn this looking for a job, anyhow. It's tur'ble slow work," Curly followed up, yawning. "Well, here's hoping you land yours, Sam."

This was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The game dragged on for a while, but nobody took any interest in it. Sam had to get ready for the work of the night, and the rest were anxious to get out and give him a chance. So presently Dick threw down his cards.

"I've had enough poker for one session. Me, I'm going to drift out and see what's moving in town."

"Think I'll snooze for a while," Sam said, stretching sleepily.

The others trooped out and left him alone. From the room rented by Davis the three watched to see that Sam did not leave without being observed. He did not appear, and about 6 o'clock Curly went back to his room.

"Time to grub," he sang out.

"That's right," Sam agreed.

They went to the New Orleans Hash House, and presently Davis and Maloney also arrived. The party ordered a good dinner and took plenty of time to eat it. Sam was obviously nervous, but eager to cover his uneasiness under a show of good spirits.

Curly finished eating just as Sam's second cup of coffee came. Flandrau, who had purposely chosen a seat in the corner where he was hemmed in by the

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Dr. H. J. Whittier, Suite 108, 1109 McGee Street, Kansas City, Mo., practicing in Kansas City since 1885, quickly heals leg sores and Varicose Ulcers without knife or pain. Our readers who are afflicted should write for free illust'd book. Adv.

GALLSTONE TROUBLES

A new booklet, written by Dr. E. E. Paddock, 3832 Brooklyn, Dept. 5P, Kansas City, Mo., tells of improved method of treating catarrhal inflammation of the Gall Bladder and Bile Ducts associated with Gall Stones, from which remarkable results are reported. Write for booklet and free trial plan.

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Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and redness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

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Now 88 Years Old But Works At Trade of Blacksmith and Feels Younger Since Piles Are Gone.

The oldest active blacksmith in Michigan is still pounding his anvil in the town of Homer—thanks to my internal method of treating piles.

Mr. Jacob Lyon, Homer, Mich.

I wish that you could hear him tell of his many experiences with ointments, salves, dilators, etc., before he tried my method. Here is a letter just received from him:

Mr. E. R. Page, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir: I want you to know what your treatment has done for me. I had suffered with piles for many years and used suppositories and all kinds of treatments, but never got relief until I tried yours. Am now completely cured. Although I am 88 years old, and the oldest active blacksmith in Michigan, I feel years younger since the piles have left me. I will surely recommend it to all I know who suffer this way. You can use my letter any way you wish and I hope it will lead others to try this wonderful remedy.

Yours truly,
J. L. LYON.

There are thousands of afflicted people suffering with piles who have never yet tried the one sensible way of treating them.

Don't be cut. Don't waste money on foolish salves, ointments, dilators, etc., but send today for a Free Trial of my internal method for the healing of Piles.

No matter whether your case is of long standing or recent development—whether it is occasional or permanent—you should send for this free trial treatment.

No matter where you live—no matter what your age or occupation—if you are troubled with piles, my method will relieve you promptly.

This liberal offer of free treatment is too important for you to neglect a single day. Write now. Send no money. Simply mail the coupon—but do this now—TODAY.

FREE PILE REMEDY

E. R. Page,
382H Page Bldg., Marshall, Mich.
Please send free trial of your Method to:

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chairs of the others, began to feel in his vest pockets.

"Darned if I've got a cigar. Sam, you're young and nimble. Go buy me one at the counter."

"Sure." Cullison was away on the instant.

Curly's hand came out of his pocket. In it was a paper. Quickly he shook the contents of the paper into the steaming cup of coffee and stirred the liquid with a spoon.

Sam brought back the cigar and drank the coffee. Without any unnecessary delay they returned to his room. Before the party had climbed the stairs the boy was getting drowsy.

"Dunno what's the matter with me. I'm feeling awful sleepy," he said, sitting on the bed.

"Why don't you take a snooze? You've got lots of time before the train goes."

"No, I don't reckon I better."

He rubbed his eyes, yawned, and slumped down. His lids wavered, shut, jerked open again, and closed slowly.

"Wake me, Curly—time for train." And with that he was sound asleep.

They took off his boots and settled him comfortably. In his pocket they found a black mask big enough to cover his whole face. The registered letter could not be found and they decided he must have destroyed it.

The sight of the mask had given Curly an idea. He was of about the same build as Sam. Why not go in his place? It would be worth doing just to catch sight of Soapy's face when he took the mask off after the robbers had been captured.

"What's the use?" Davis protested. "It's an unnecessary risk. They might shoot you in place of Sam."

"I'll look out for myself. Don't worry about that. Before the time for getting rid of Sam comes Mr. Soapy and his bunch will be prisoners."

They argued it out, but Curly was set and could not be moved. He dressed in young Cullison's clothes and with Maloney took the express at 9:57. Davis remained to guard Sam.

Now comes the crucial moment—will young Sam pay the price of his folly by losing his life in the dramatic situation that follows or will Curly in all his reckless courage and true-heartedness be able to save him for the sake of the girl he loves? The next installment is the last. You can't afford to miss it.

One Hundred Dollars

By Beulah Robertson

THE long line of prisoners marched wearily into the little courtroom. They all looked much alike; dingy, well-worn clothes, red handkerchief knotted at throat. Some bore scars, ghastly white against the sunburn of their faces. To the young doctor, who sat in the corner of the room, these were but the earmarks of their trade, for these men were insurgents in one of those small South American republics where a new president is inaugurated every time his devoted followers succeed in assassinating the previous incumbent of that much-coveted office. This time they had not succeeded, but being discovered in their attempt to gain access to the presidential apartments, had been captured, and now awaited sentence—for that was all their trial would amount to.

The courtroom was well filled, mostly with the friends and relatives of the unfortunate men. The day was sultry, and inside the little brick room with its low roof, the heat was almost suffocating. A breathless stillness prevailed, broken now and then by the sobs of a woman. The doctor was glad to hear those sobs, glad to know that in this country where death had grown commonplace, somebody actually cared. He lost interest in the trial while watching these women, the mothers, wives and sisters of the prisoners. They were hopeless, sordid, a few of them indifferent. They lived in anticipation of this. It did not come as a great shock to them now.

One face particularly interested him, that of the woman who had sobbed. It was a pretty little brown face, now broken by great grief, and the expression was absolutely hopeless. Chita had come to hear her husband's sentence. She knew it would be death, for Jean had long been a leader of the enemies of the president. Restlessly she slipped the long braids of dark hair thru her slender brown fingers.

One by one the prisoners were sentenced. When Jean's turn came he stepped forward. His face was absolutely impassive. He was sentenced to be shot to death on Saturday morning. With bowed head he returned to his place; then he looked up and over that sweltering room. Eagerly his gaze shifted from one face to another until he found Chita. It was the first time he had looked at her since he had entered the room, and the look that passed between them was indescribable. Long and steadily he looked, until Chita's little brown face became less hopeless, and after a while she even smiled.

Chita would save him, he thought. Chita had never failed him. When he had stolen gold from the mission Chita had begged enough to return it so he went unpunished; when he had had fever she had nursed him back to health, and had persuaded the young doctor to come without pay to the miserable hut under the cliff. That was when he was so ill that Chita's skill was unavailing. But she found a way to save him then, and she would find a way now.

CHITA knew what was passing in his mind, but she felt powerless. Saturday morning! Why, this was Tuesday! The intervening days he would spend in the stone prison just across the dusty street. Old Casper was the keeper, and there was absolutely no way to escape. But Jean expected her to save him; she had never failed him, and she would not fail in the greatest of the many troubles he had brought upon himself.

That night Jean slept peacefully on the hard bench of the prison, and dreamed that Chita had saved him. Poor Chita, she had walked wearily the five long dusty miles to the little hut called home. There was no food in the house, but that didn't matter. She wanted only to think, to think of a means of saving Jean. Each day she walked back to the town to visit him, and each day she became more hopeless, more haggard. No plan could she devise by which to save him, yet still he believed that she could. She must, she must, and so the hours dragged by.

On Friday, as she was leaving the prison, old Casper, the keeper, stopped her in the passage.

"Chita," he said, "look at that niche in the stone. Did you know it connected with the door of your husband's cell?"

Chita saw a small hole as if it had been chipped out of the stone with a sharp instrument. Inside it was absolutely smooth and could in no way be connected with the cell. Old Caspar was wicked and greedy. He delighted in the suffering he saw daily about him, and Chita passed on, thinking he had made the remark to cause her more pain. But Casper followed and whispered in her ear:

"Once a man was imprisoned in that cell. His friends wanted to help him to escape. They placed money in that niche and the door flew open."

Chita looked at him blankly; she did not understand.

"The woods are full of insurgents. One more alive or dead would not make much difference to the president."

"Oh," said Chita. Her dark eyes opened wide, and her small hands left off the endless caressing of her braids. When she spoke her voice was tense and unnatural. "How much did his friends put in the hole?"

Caspar's greedy eyes ran over her small figure. She couldn't raise any sum before the next morning, so it little mattered how much he might say; but he hesitated with the answer, enjoying the misery in that small brown face. "A hundred dollars," he said finally; "a hundred dollars in American money might make that door open."

"Might?" she questioned.

"A hundred in the hole would open the door, but it might not get in there," and he laughed at her departing figure, but Chita had not heard the last words. With his assurance that money would free her husband, she ran out of the prison as if she might find it if she hurried.

Down the dusty street she ran, unconscious of the terrific heat or the stares of those she passed. For want of breath she finally stopped. She was now opposite the medical school and, exhausted, she sat down in the shade of its wall to consider. She must have a hundred dollars before tomorrow morning. She had not a friend of whom to borrow; and all the worldly goods she possessed would not bring a tenth as much, could she find a purchaser, which was very doubtful. But she would think

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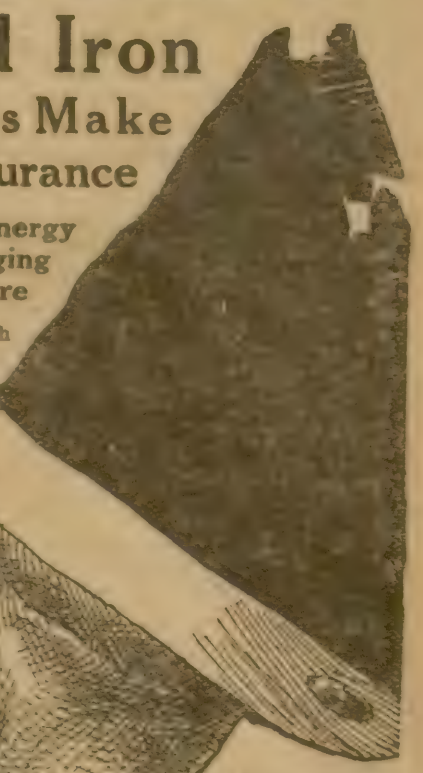
115 E. 39th Street Dept. 196 Chicago

The Man Who Says "The World Is Mine" Is The Man of Blood and Iron

The Kind of Man Nuxated Iron Helps Make By Building Red Blood, Strength and Endurance

Physician Explains Relation of Strong Nerves and Physical Energy To Attainment of Success and Power and Tells Why the Cringing Weakling, Whose Blood Lacks Iron, Faces Defeat and Failure



The man who wakes in the morning, tingling with energy and buoyant with health is the man who is going to make good during the day. The World is in his grasp. ANYTHING he wants to do he is ABLE to do. He faces obstacles and overcomes them. They are mere incidents in the day's work. His blood rich in iron, feeds the brain wholesome food—makes it work evenly and think clearly. He is the kind of man Nuxated Iron helps to make. Physicians explain below why they prescribe Nuxated Iron for weak, nervous, run-down people, to build red blood, strength and endurance.

"Many a man has changed himself from a cringing weakling and dismal failure into a veritable mountain of strength and energy by building up his red blood corpuscles and filling his body with the courage and power to do and dare," says Dr. John J. Van Horne, formerly Medical Inspector and Clinical Physician on the Board of Health of New York City. "The keen, active brains and tremendous force possessed by healthy, red-blooded people, often gives them a great advantage over those whose thin, pale, watery blood robs them of self-confidence and initiative, weakening their wills and causing them to imagine they are the victims of all sorts of dread ailments. Yet there are thousands of such men who undergo a most remarkable transformation the moment they get plenty of the right kind of iron into their blood to give increased energy and endurance. Their imagined ills are forgotten, they gain physical poise and fitness, mental alertness and greater power to combat obstacles and withstand severe strains. To help build stronger, healthier men and women, better able physically to meet the problems of everyday life, I believe that physicians should, at every opportunity prescribe organic iron—Nuxated Iron—for in my experience it is one of the best tonic and red blood builders known to medical science."

"It is the men of blood and iron who are towers of strength and masters of circumstances," says Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly physician of Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.), New York, and the Westchester County Hospital, in commenting upon the relation of sound nerves and physical endurance to the attainment of success and power. "Every keen, active successful man and woman of to-day recognizes that a sound, strong body is the basis of all real achievement and they leave no stone unturned to safeguard their health. Lack of iron in the blood not only makes a man a physical and mental weakling, but it utterly robs him of that virile force, that stamina and strength of will which are so necessary to success and power in every walk of life. I strongly advise every man who is fagged out by worry, work and other strains to build up his strength, energy and endurance by taking some form of organic iron—Nuxated Iron—for I consider it one of the foremost blood and body builders, the best to which I have ever had recourse."

The World is yours to do with as you will when the power of rich red blood helps you conquer every obstacle and make you Master of your own Destiny.

Manufacturers' Note: Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians, is not a secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated and does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach. The manufacturers guarantee successful and entirely satisfactory results to every purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

of a way, and the slim brown hands pulled at the long braids more restlessly than ever. For a long time she sat there in the dust and gazed at the tall wall of the medical school. Suddenly she jumped up, saying to herself, "It isn't honest, but I'll do it, for Jean must live."

"WHAT can I do for you?" said the young doctor, as Chita paused timidly in the door of the hospital.

"I want to see the superintendent."

"You look ill. Let me get something for you."

But Chita only replied, "I want to see the superintendent," and the young doctor, seeing all else was useless, conducted her to him.

"Did you ever buy bodies, people's bodies?" she said.

"Yes, we very often buy human bodies. Why do you ask?"

"I have a body to sell—a man's body."

"How old is it?"

"About forty years."

"Oh, no! I mean how long has the body been dead."

"It isn't dead yet," said Chita, her face twitching. "My husband is sentenced to be shot tomorrow morning, and I need money, so won't you please buy his body?"

The young doctor listened to this dialogue, and felt sorry that she had come here. So she was like all the rest of these natives, caring only for money, and he had thought her so different. Once she had walked five miles in the night to come for him to help her husband when the latter was very ill, and now she was trying to sell his body before he was dead. They were hopeless, these natives.

Chita read the look in his eyes, and she was sorry that he should think so of her. "One must live," she said, "and there is no other way."

She wished she could tell him that the "one" was Jean, and not herself. But the young doctor went out as if he were disgusted, and poor Chita was left alone to make the bargain with the superintendent. He offered her a hundred dollars for the body, making her sign an order to the effect that it must be given to the hospital authorities immediately upon the execution of the sentence.

Chita did as directed and hurried away, the precious bills held tightly in one hand, and with the other she unconsciously stroked both braids of the long, dark hair. She had over a mile to walk back to the prison. By the time she had opened the doors to Jean's freedom by tucking the bills away in the niche in the stone, the early tropical night would have come on, and before morning she and Jean would be far away from the reach of the prison or the hospital authorities.

SHE smiled as she thought of greedy, hard-hearted old Caspar. He would have no trouble with his superiors. Little did they care whether nineteen or twenty were shot down on the morrow. If one were missing, his name would not even be known. She and Jean would begin again in some far-off place. They would be happy. Still smiling, she looked up into the grave face of the young doctor, and altho they passed hurriedly Chita again read accusation in his eyes. He had seen her smiling, and he knew she had the price of her husband's body in her pocket. She wished again that she could make him understand.

When Chita reached the prison she learned that Caspar had been relieved by the night keeper. How stupid of her! Why had she not thought of that? Poor Chita felt for a moment as if it were too late to carry out her plans; but no, she would not give up yet, she would come early in the morning. They might escape even in daylight. There was still a chance. Upon inquiry she learned that there was no regular hour for Caspar's resumption of his duties. Sometimes he came at 7, sometimes at 8.

The first rays of the tropical sun found a little brown woman outside the prison gate. She was waiting for Caspar. All night she had waited, lest she be too late.

The sun rose higher, and he came not. People began to resume the duties of the day, and still no Caspar. Surely it must be 7 o'clock. A man drove a cart up to the gate of the prison and went inside. Presently he returned, and while pretending to busy himself with the harness watched her curiously. Chita hardly noted his presence. She was thinking of Caspar; other things did not matter. Soon a pistol shot rang out. They were trying the weapon she thought, but she and Jean would be pushing thru the jungle before it should sound again. Directly the cart was driven into the prison court and then out again, but Chita's back was turned. She was looking for Caspar. Hours, it seemed, passed before he came, but really it was but a short while. She could hardly have forced herself to wait a few minutes before following him inside.

"There's no use in your coming here," said Caspar.

Then she showed him the roll of yellow bills, and told him there was enough to fill the little hole in the wall. The expression on his face became hideous.

"You are too late," he cried. "The superintendent sent a man here an hour ago with your order for his body. Since he had brought a cart, Jean was shot at once and the body given to him. A few hours would have made no difference anyway. Get out!" His loss had made a demon of him, and he gave the woman an angry shove.

Blindly Chita found her way out into the sunlit street. Slowly she realized that the money was still in her hand—the price of Jean's body. With all her strength she flung it from her. The yellow bills fluttered to the ground. For a long time she stood motionless in the quiet street, staring, staring and seeing nothing. Then she stooped and began carefully to gather up the bills one by one. The young doctor passed, and seeing the fresh grief in her face and the scattered money, he murmured compassionately, "One must live."

But Chita saw him not.

Report of the Great Meeting of Ledger Characters

(Continued From Page 2)

hung down at its sides. It was Hammond, of the Beast Maker.)

HAMMOND.

Yes, and what happens when that is done? The last attempt to make a subunion of heroes resulted in a wrangle as to whether I could be included. I was the hero of the Beast Maker, and yet, by Heavens, I was driven over to take a position among the animal characters. I will start a new character union unless my status is recognized soon!

PRESIDENT STRONGBOW.

I have looked up your status, Hammond. Have no fear. You are a hero, and not a gorilla. I will work to that end with you. (Hammond sat down.) Are there are any more complaints?

(No one had anything else to offer. Suddenly the doors of the rear hall were broken open, and two blue-clad policemen, accompanied by a musty-looking, bald-headed man with a legal document in his hand, strode down the hall and faced the audience. They were attended by That Strange Tramp and Hugo Flauvette, each almost more disreputable looking than the other. A tense silence filled the hall. The bald-headed man, who resembled nothing so much as a shyster lawyer, read his document.)

Re Hugo Flauvette et That Strange Tramp vs. Society of Ledger Characters. It being proven to Judge Rumhauser, sitting in the Circuit Court, by Messrs. Hugo Flauvette and That Strange Tramp, bonafide characters in the Ledger pages, that they have been boycotted and excluded from the Union of Ledger Characters, suit for $200,000 is hereby brought against the society as a whole. Members will be obliged to file schedule of assets with county clerk at once. Skinnem & Workem, attorneys-at-law.

A pin could have been heard had it dropped. President Strongbow arose. His mien was majestic, his dignity was superb, his aplomb was unruffled.

PRESIDENT STRONGBOW.

So long as I am president of this honored band of craftsmen, I say that no character created by the Editor of the Ledger shall be admitted to its membership. As for the suit—(he turned to the usher, who sat underneath the speaker's platform). Boy, page the two men who found the Treasure of Cuahutemoc. Lucky for us all, gentlemen, that every treasure found in the Ledger stories goes into our common fund. Now, we'll pay these blackguards off in fictional money, and adjourn for another year!

Reported by

The Editor

Doctor Cupid

That love sometimes cures disease is a fact that has been called to the attention of the public by a prominent physician. Love is not, however, the cure for all women. Many a woman is nervous and irritable, feels dragged down and worn out for no reason that she can think of.

Doctor Pierce's Favorite Prescription gives new life and new strength to weak, worn-out, run-down women. "Favorite Prescription" makes weak women strong and sick women well. It is now sold by all druggists in the United States in tablets as well as liquid form.

KOKOMO, IND.—"Some time ago I felt 'draggy' and worn-out and greatly in need of a tonic. A friend suggested to me to try Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. I had taken other tonics but I never took anything that helped me so quickly as the 'Favorite Prescription.' It was not an unpleasant medicine to take and my whole system seemed to be benefited."—MRS. FLOSSIE COOP, 2108 N. Market Street.

Readers of the Chicago Ledger will find three important and interesting announcements in next week's Ledger.

This Boy Makes $5.00 a Week

Delivering The Saturday Blades, Chicago Ledgers and "Lone Scouts"

FRANK WHEELER

of 332 W. Spruce street, Canton, Ill., is one of our many agents who make big money selling the CHICAGO LEDGER, THE SATURDAY BLADE and "LONE SCOUT." He is shown in this picture with his pony which he has earned selling the Blade, Ledger and "Lone Scout."

Frank goes to school, enjoys the everyday sports, and still has time to earn $5.00 a week. Surely if he can be so successful, you can also. Remember that you have the same opportunity that he has. GRASP IT! Show us that you have the stuff in you that makes a MAN. Fill out the coupon today and become our agent.

We have 30,000 boys who sell our great papers—The Saturday Blade, Chicago Ledger and "Lone Scout." They have built up paper routes and each week deliver their papers to their regular customers. Thousands of our agents earn from $1.00 to $5.00 a week. Many make more. Frank Wheeler, whose picture appears here, is no different from the other agents, and his picture is shown to prove to you what our agents are doing and to convince you that you can do the same.

Why Don't You?

People in every town and R. F. D. know our great papers. We receive hundreds of letters from people asking the name of the local agent so that they can buy the papers from him. We want thousands more agents, so that there will be an agent in every town and R. F. D. route, and to get them we have a wonderful new plan which gives them cash profits on every paper they sell and

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We pay your expense of joining Lone Scouts of America if you want to join and can qualify. When you send your first report we will pay the cost of sending you Lone Scout Membership Badge, Handbook, and Membership Card.

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Stories for the Ledger Boys and Girls

Herb's Idea

"HERE she comes! Let's run. Don't let on we've seen her."

The five girls broke into a run and kept their faces straight ahead, but Amanda knew they had seen her and the broad friendly smile faded from her lips.

"I never want to butt in," she said to herself blinking back the tears, "but it is kind of lonesome when nobody will go with me—and this is graduation day!"

She stopped a minute to get out her handkerchief when she heard footsteps behind her, quick, halting steps, then the words:

"Never mind, kid, let 'em run. Who cares?"

She turned around and there she saw Herb Graham leaning on his crutch. Herb was in her class and she liked him. He was a quiet, studious boy.

"One would think I was trying to butt in," said Amanda wrathfully. "Those girls are always going off by themselves and not letting anybody else in their good times. I thought on graduation day, with us all going to the school house to decorate, they'd be different. I s'pose it'll be the same way all thru high school."

"Say!" cried Herb. "You know what you said just now has given me an idea! Why should anybody be left out of good times? Of course, with me it's different. I'm lame. But you're just as nice as anybody."

"Now, Herb," said Amanda, severely. "I won't have you talk like that. You've got more brains than anybody in the class and the best disposition. I'm a nice one to be grumbling to you."

Herb grinned. "Well," he said, "I was going to say, why shouldn't everybody have good times. I've only been in the class two terms, you know, but I've noticed a thing or two. I've noticed that those five girls in front of us and about six of the fellers seem to be the only ones who are having any fun. They're always whispering secrets and running away from the rest of us and acting as if they owned the whole school, which isn't so as they're only eleven and we have twenty-five in our class."

"Well, what's your idea?" demanded Amanda. "Hurry up and tell me because here comes Janet."

"That's good," said Herb, waving to Janet. "Come on, I've got an idea!"

Janet came on the run and the three stood in the road with their heads together for some time.

Meanwhile the Other Bunch, as the haughty eleven were called by Amanda, met in the schoolroom and began laughing and talking, thinking that they had plenty of time to decorate the room. Usually the rest of the class stood meekly aside and let them do anything like that.

But what was their surprise when the door suddenly flew open and in walked about twelve of their schoolmates in a very businesslike way. One went to the closet and brought out the bunting, two others got hold of the hammers and nails, and the rest, with a pleasant: "Excuse us, please," began moving back the forms and carrying in folding chairs for the audience.

"I think a heavy rope stretched across here—to make a sort of stage would be nice," suggested Janet.

"And we could have lanterns covered with crepe paper to make footlights," said another.

They were as full of ideas as could be and when the teacher came in a few minutes later she was delighted to see them all "taking so much interest." But the Other Bunch did not look so happy. They felt quite out of it, for the first time. They couldn't imagine what the mysterious actions meant.

But later the Other Bunch began its good times as they had already asked the teacher to let them be ushers and they had a play to act and some of their number could sing, speak pieces and play the piano and violin.

"No use," said Amanda to Janet as the two girls stood in the hall taking a drink. "We can't make ourselves more prominent than the Other Bunch. They're too clever."

"But you know what our plan was," said Janet.

"Yes, but it might take a long time," and Amanda sighed.

The two girls had stolen out during an intermission, but they stayed too long, for suddenly they heard Dick Sharpe's violin.

"We'd better stay here until he is thru," said Amanda. "Let's sit on the step."

They sat on the top step of the stairs leading down to the class rooms below from which came a murmur of voices. There were children graduating from every grade that day. The building was full of graduates and their proud families. Suddenly Amanda sniffed the air.

"Janet," she said, "I smell smoke!"

They ran down the stairs and peeped down into the basement. Smoke and flames were pouring from one of the rooms down there.

"Now's our chance to be prominent!" whispered Janet." You warn our room and I'll warn the primaries."

Off sped the girls, Janet walking quietly into each room and whispering the warning to the teacher, who immediately had the little pupils form in line and march out.

The smoke was getting thick. What was Amanda doing on the top floor?

Amanda peeped into her class room and saw the teacher, but could not catch her eye. Dick was bowing to the applause, his fiddle in one hand. Amanda walked quickly in and went to his side before the whole crowd.

"Dick," she whispered, "there's a fire in the basement. Play a march quick, as soon as I ask them all to form in line."

Dick looked bewildered as Amanda turned and said quietly:

"The next on the program will be a march and everybody please form in line at once and march down stairs and outside as quick as possible. There is a little smoke in the basement and everybody would be safer outside."

"Bully for you!" whispered Dick as he scraped a lively march.

"Will you join our new club?" Amanda asked as the whole class and the families marched pass them.

"Sure, I guess we'd all join anything you wish now," said Dick. "What is the club?"

"The Whole School Club," replied Amanda. "No chumming off or running away or snubbing."

"I'm with you!" cried Dick, the ringleader of the Other Bunch, as they turned to explain to the teacher.

How a Wonderful Idea Originated.

"MOTHER," said Tom, "I saw a very strange thing today. I was reading in the Public Library when a blind man came in and asked the lady at the desk where he could get a book to read."

"But what is so strange about that?" asked mother.

"But he was a blind man, mother. How could he read when he couldn't see? The library lady took him into another room and sat him before a table full of big books. I wanted to go in and see what they were, but I was afraid they would think I was butting in."

"Had you gone in," answered mother, "you would have seen a very interesting sight. Special books are made for the blind. They have raised letters and the blind people are thus enabled to enjoy the pastime of reading by passing their fingers over the surface of the letters."

"They read with their hands!" cried Tom, "Who ever thought of making books like that, mother?"

"There was a man named Valentine Hauy," said mother, "who had always been interested in the blind and anxious to do something for them. One day he saw a blind beggar and hoping to help him, he put his hand in his pocket, drew out a coin and placed it in the beggar's hand. He had hardly taken a step before the blind man called after him: 'Didn't you make a mistake? You handed me a franc piece instead of a sou.' 'But how did you know that so quickly?" asked the bewildered Hauy. 'I can tell easily,' answered the beggar, all I have to do is to run my finger across the coin's surface.'

"Valentine Hauy continued on his walk with the blind man's words running thru his mind. At last the great idea formed itself in his mind. 'Surely,' he cried aloud in his excitement, 'if the blind can tell from the least touch the value of a small piece of money, it would be easy for them in the same way to distinguish any raised object—a figure, a letter, a mark—I'll do it!'

"Hauy set to work on his great idea, and he invented a method for teaching the blind to read. One day he saw a blind boy begging outside of a church and he took this boy for his first pupil. The boy learned quickly. Passing his hands over the raised letters he was able to read any book of that character that was set before him. When he was able to read fluently, Hauy invited a great many learned people to see the exhibition. Encouraged by the praise which this performance won for him, Hauy perfected his method and then appealed to the public for means to instruct the blind. From all sides money poured in for this worthy cause and soon he had enough to open the first institute for teaching the blind to read. The next time you go to the library ask the 'library lady' to let you look at the books for the blind."

"Oh, I will," cried Tom, "Thanks so much for telling me that story. I think Valentine Hauy must have been a very good man to have had such a wonderful idea, don't you?"

Ruined.

"THAT boy of mine is ambitious, but, unfortunately, I didn't know of his special desire until too late. He wants to be the president of an agricultural college."

"Well, why can't he be?"

"Why not? Why, I've taught that boy until he knows all about practical farming!"

Thought and Grinned.

FIRST-CLASS SCOUT—"Once we had a very thoughtful hike."

Tenderfoot—"What was it, a nature-study hike?"

First-class Scout—"No, we were thinking of going on one, when something happened that prevented us from going, so all we did was think about it."

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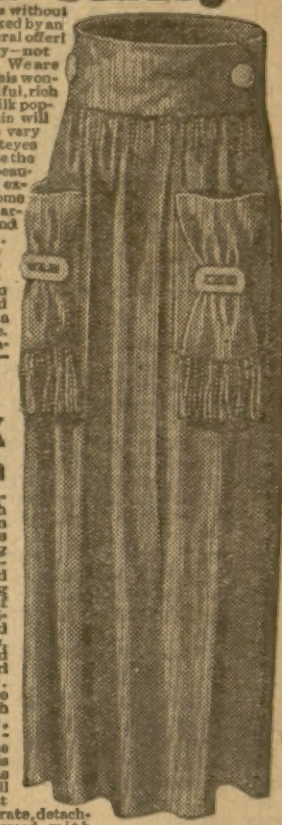

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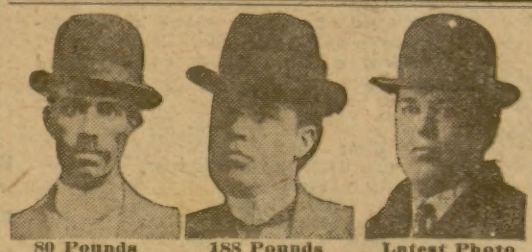

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5 YEAR GUARANTEE

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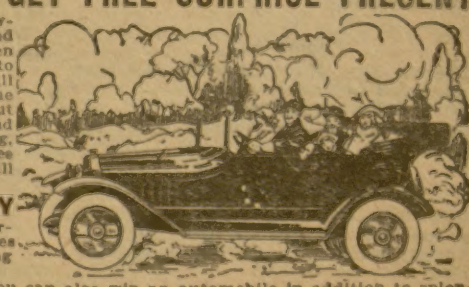
Genuine full standard size railroad style watch with locomotive on dial and locomotive handsomely engraved on back. Full nickel plated case, extra dust proof, Arabic numerals on dial, heavy R. R. style figures. Genuine American make, stem wind and set, fully GUARANTEED for 5 YEARS. To advertise our business and introduce this wonderful watch and our great catalogue of Elgin, Waltham and Hampden watches we will send this elegant watch to any address by mail postpaid for ONLY $2.95 and if you sell two of these watches we will give you ONE SAMPLE WATCH FREE for your trouble. Send this advertisement with $2.95 and watch will be sent by mail postpaid, or send $5.90 for two and we will send ONE EXTRA WATCH FREE. Order today as this offer may not appear again. Address ELLIOTT PHELPS CO., 1112 Morton Building, CHICAGO, ILL.

SOLVE THIS PUZZLE AND GET FREE SURPRISE PRESENT

This picture shows one of our friends driving an automobile. In the scenery and around the automobile are six partly hidden faces which it will be lots of fun for you to find. Can you find them? Try it. It will pay you. When you have found four of the faces, mark each with a cross (X), cut out the advertisement and mail it to us and inclose four cents in stamps for packing, postage, mailing, etc., and a beautiful free surprise present will be sent you. You will delight in owning this present.



AUTOMOBILE GIVEN AWAY

We will also make you a present of a Certificate good for 2,000 free auto votes and tell you all about this splendid touring car which we are going to give away free.

MEN, WOMEN, BOYS AND GIRLS—You can also win an automobile in addition to splendid prizes, such as phonographs, jewelry, silverware, bicycles, watches, cameras, and other things you like. We will also send you a copy of two great national publications worth ten cents. Write your name and address plainly, and inclose the four cents in stamps for packing, mailing, etc., of the free surprise present.

Auto Puzzle Dept. 6, W. D. Boyce Co., 500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

HOT OFF THE JOKESMITH'S ANVIL

Striking Similarity.

"Ever notice the resemblance between getting married and making a call? You go to adore, ring the belle and give your name to the maid."

"Yes, and then you are taken in!"

Mistaken Calling.

Sir Harry Lauder golfs with more enthusiasm than skill, and one day on the links he was in unusually bad form.

At the fourth hole Sir Harry dislodged an unusually large sod. The sod rose up into the air and sailed like a great bird down the wind, and Sir Harry's caddy, watching it, said to his companion:

"Did you tell me that guy was an actor, Pete?"

"Sure, Bill," said the other caddy, a note of apology in his voice. "An actor—that's what they call him."

The first caddy took a thoughtful chew of tobacco.

"I'd call him a scene shifter," he said.

A Slap in the Face.

Mrs. Jenkins was reading the daily paper. Presently she exclaimed:

"What strange things these society people do, Jeremiah!"

"What's up, now?" asked Jeremiah, who was half asleep.

"Well, it says here about the lauching of a ship: 'With graceful ease the huge vessel slid into the water just after the Duchess of Dumpshire had cracked a bottle of champagne on her nose?' It must have hurt her! Why should she mutilate her face like that, Jeremiah?"

The Brand She Wanted.

Solicitor (whose client is thinking of getting a divorce)—"Well, you can get it for about £20; everything done quietly and no publicity."

Client—"And how much will the real thing cost, with lots of publicity and everything?"

He Knew the Trade.

Shoe Merchant—"So you think you would make a good salesman, do you?"

Job Hunter—"Yes, sir, if you will put me in the ladies' department and let me have my way with the stock."

"And what do you want to do with the stock?"

"Oh, only to mark all the No. 4 shoes No. 2."

"You're engaged, sir, at once."

Nearly a Prize.

At the conclusion of the school term prizes were distributed. When one of the pupils returned home his mother chanced to be entertaining callers.

"Well, Charlie," asked one of these, "did you get a prize?"

"Not exactly," said Charlie, "but I got a horrible mention."

Scenting the Book.

A small boy came to the Brightwood library and solemnly asked for cottage cheese. The librarian thought a moment and asked if he did not mean the book, "Scottish Chiefs."

"Yes," he said pleasantly, "I knew it was something like cheese."

Didn't Fease Him.

Socrates lifted his cup—"What's this stuff?" he asked.

"Hemlock!" replied the cupbearer.

"Oh!" said Socrates, "that's all right—I thought it was one of those d—d substitutes for beer.

Repetition.

"There's Mrs. Nuptials with the man she divorced five years ago."

"Same old husband, eh?"

"Yes, same old husband, only revamped."

Somebody Else's Money.

"Look 'ere, guv-nor, your son always gives me 'arf a dollar for this job."

"Ah, my good man—he has a wealthy father!"

Futurism.

"What does that picture represent?"

"I don't remember. I painted it over a week ago."

By Return Mail.

If there is one thing on earth that young Mrs. Blake likes more than another, it is clothes—hats, frocks, coats and—oh, all the rest of 'em!

One morning she rushed into her hubby's private room at his office and burst out gleefully.

"I've just ordered the most beautiful hat to be sent home. It's the sweetest thing you ever saw, dearest, and only $25! It's a perfect love!"

But "dearest" had reached his limit. Without raising his eyes from the letter he was reading, he replied:

"I regret to have to tell you, my dear, that your love will be returned."

No Nonsense About Him.

He was looking for a good canine companion, and had answered an advertisement in the newspaper. The following conversation ensued:

"You advertised a sensible dog for sale?"

"Yep."

"What do you mean by a sensible dog?"

"This pup has never had a ribbon around his neck and has never ridden in a limousine since the day he was born. He's a happy-hearted, bone-burying, cat-chasing, 100 per cent dog."

Not What Was Ordered.

"Ma'am, here's a man at the door with a parcel for you."

"What is it, Bridget?"

"It's a fish, ma'am, and it's marked C. O. D."

"Then make the man take it straight back to the dealer. I ordered trout."

Menu Enough.

Old Portly found himself stranded for an hour or so in a strange town and decided to have something to eat.

He entered the only restaurant he could find and called for a menu.

"There ain't one, sir," said the waiter, who looked as if he'd been blighted in infancy, "but I can tell you what's on!"

"Let's have it, then," said Portly.

The waiter took a deep breath and reeled off a lengthy list.

"You have a good memory, my man," said Portly.

"No, sir," said the waiter meekly, "I just looked at the table cloth."

Used to It.

Sweeping his long hair back with an impressive gesture the visitor faced the proprietor of the film studio. "I would like to secure a place in your moving-picture company," he said.

"You are an actor?" asked the film man.

"Yes."

"Had any experience acting without audiences?"

A flicker of sadness shone in the visitor's eyes as he replied:

"Acting without audiences is what brought me here!"

My Enemy.

I hate him;
That man with the black hair,
So neatly parted.
And the contained smile
That fascinates foolish girls.
I hate him.
If he looks at the girl by my side,
She will lose interest in me.

Incurable, Too.

"You claim there are microbes in kisses?" she asked the young doctor.

"There are," he said.

"What disease do they bring?" she asked.

"Palpitation of the heart!"

She Wasn't.

Husband—"That new maid is certainly quiet. One would never know that she was about the place."

Wife—"She isn't. She left this morning."

Lost Forever.

"So that rich old bachelor didn't propose."

Madge—"No, he ate six meals at that summer hotel where they advertise home cooking and decided to stay single."

Brain Teasers.

Geographical Double Acrostic.

312—Primals and finals give the names of two of the U. S. A.

A cozy abode.
A town in Pennsylvania.
A wagon.
A man's name.
Facility.
Quarréls.
Transgressions.
A town in Pennsylvania.
A famous American College.

Synonyms.

313—1. Curtail a plant useful for its fiber and leave a turned under edge of cloth; curtail another and leave to thrust forth; behead another and leave careless.

2. Behead a stream and leave a noisy bird; behead another and leave to be full of fumes; curtail another and leave to rend asunder.

3. Behead a rest for a sitting person and leave the adornment of the head; behead another and leave an instrument; curtail another and leave the ocean.

4. Curtail an operation of the mind and leave slender; behead another and leave sick; behead another and leave a measure of paper.

Double Acrostic.

314—The primals and finals spell the name of two flowers; words: 1. To mend. 2. A disturber. 3. An eastern country. 4. A North American Indian. 5. The head of a Jewish church. 6. A large body of water. 7. An odor. 8. The planet on which we live.

Transposed State Capitals.

315—1. Oh, I saw my pal. 2. Daw Mission. 3. Lamar got money. 4. Prove tin melt. 5. I prove cinder. 6. More ale nogs. 7. Mandolin sap. 8. Harvest Lawn Co. 9. Wade, dear lover. 10. O never sold. 11. Is Mack's son J? 12. Ripe reds.

The name of the capital and the abbreviation of the State to which it belongs can be found in each case. The letters do not stand in order.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES.

308. Charade.

Himalyas.

309. Numerical Problem.

David. (D-A-VI-D).

310. Enigma.

Liberty Bell.

311. Four Word Square.

S H O E
H I V E
O V A L
E E L S

It is not desired that readers send in the answers to the puzzles. They are printed simply as brain teasers, and the correct answers will be printed the following week.

Sounds Like It.

Sunday School Teacher—"Can any of you tell me what an epistle is?"

Scholar—"I can. An epistle is the wife of an apostle."

Difficult Position.

"My," exclaimed Mr. Klumsay at the sophomore cotillion, "this floor's awfully slippery. It's hard to keep on your feet."

"Oh," replied the fair partner, sarcastically, "then you were really trying to keep on my feet? I thought it was purely accidental."

And Then the Fray.

Mrs. Pipps—"Heavens, wake up, Henry, wake up! I hear a harsh, grating noise. A burglar is trying to pry open the door."

Mr. Pipps—"Nonsense. It's some rat trying that cake you baked today."

"Our Advertising Rates."

Referring to an old citizen as a "relic of antiquity," $1.

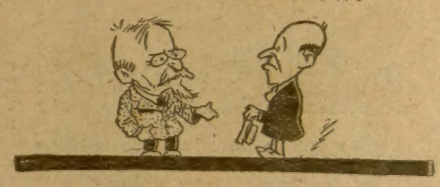
Calling a new made lawyer "a legal light of which the profession should feel proud," $2.25.

Proof.

"O, Jones," said the botanist, "I see a pair of overalls working in the field. I wonder if it's a man or a woman."

"You say it's working? Then it's a woman."

The Patient's View.



"I'm afraid," said the doctor, calmly, "that I shall have to operate."

"Afraid!" growled the patient. "Afraid you'll have to operate! You know darn well you're hoping you'll have to."

The Basis of the Language.

He was a Chinaman. He ran a laundry, and no one ever heard him speak a word of English. I often wondered why he had not learned our beautiful language. But at my queries he only shook his head.

One day when I paid for my weekly wash he returned less change than usual. "You've short-changed me, Ping Pong!" I cried.

Ping Pong smiled blandly, showed me his Americanization of Foreign Merchants certificate, and, speaking for the first time in faultless English, replied: "No, I've raised!"

The Better Way.

The sergeant major was a bit of a martinet—it does happen sometimes—and was constantly finding fault with the slightest things.

One day, as he sat in his room in the barracks, he saw a private pass in full uniform with a bucket.

This roused the sergeant-major to a fury, and he promptly dashed to the door and hailed the private.

"Where are you going?"

"To fetch some water, sir," replied the man.

"What!" yelled the sergeant major, "in those trousers?"

"No, sir; in the bucket."

His Jewel.

"Is Grisby unhappily married?"

"I'm afraid so."

"But when he married his wife he called her his 'jewel.'"

"So he did, but he discovered later he couldn't afford the kind of setting she demanded."

YOU AND I.

When you are coming o'er the lea,
And I am going o'er it, too,
You see I see that you see me,
And I see you see I see you.

And as we near each other, too,
And as we pass upon the lea,
I think you think I think of you.
You think I think you think of me!

A Parallel.

"What is your position on this great question?"

"My position," replied Senator Sorghum, "is somewhat like that of a tight-rope walker. I don't want to stop to argue or show off. What I want to do is to get to solid ground."

Its Defect.

He—"How can the critics call that play true to nature?"

"Why not?"

He—"The leading character is a contented wife."

Taking No Chances.

Mrs. A.—"I really believe she had her second husband selected before she was divorced from the first one."

Mrs. B.—"Certainly. Why else should she get a divorce?"

Promoted.

"Isn't Miss Priscilla Knowitall a professor in that girls' college any more?"

"Oh, no; she's gone way up in the world since she was there. She's getting a cook's pay now."

Just Like 'Em.

Mother—"If you marry him in haste you will repent at leisure."

Daughter—"Well, I can't bear to think of another girl repenting at leisure with him."

Out of the Frying Pan.

"Has your present wife a more even temper than your first had?"

"More even? No, even more."

"Nothing to Wear."

"I'VE come to take you to the Pittingers' party," announced the man who was engaged to the girl.

"Oh, dear!" said the girl. "I can't go! I haven't anything I can wear on my head!"

"What's the matter with that shovel shaped lid you wore the other night? That one's a pippin for fair, and very becoming to you. I remember that all the girls admired it."

"Yes," explained the girl, "the hat's all right. And, as you say, it was much admired the other night. But I couldn't wear it to the Pittingers', because it was my sister's hat and the Pittinger girls know it was her hat, because they helped her to make it. They even supplied some of the trimming, which they exchanged with my sister for some trimming she had. I simply can't wear that hat to the Pittingers loaded down with Pittinger trimmings. I have my faults, but I possess a sense of fitness.

"Now, if I could borrow Mabel's hat I would be all right. The Pittinger girls have never seen Mabel's hat, nor are they familiar with the trimming, but she's going to wear it herself."

"Why not wear a hat of your own, then?" inquired the young man who was engaged to the girl. "You surely must have one?"

"Yes, I have another hat, but I can't wear it, because it is an exact model of a hat that Hannah Pittinger brought from Paris. I simply couldn't let her know that I had copied that hat!"

"Come to think of it," replied the man who was engaged to the girl, "I can't go to the Pittingers' either. This overcoat of mine is one I won from Horatio Pittinger in a little game and his sisters or his mother or some of his family would be sure to notice it right away and there would have to be explanations as to how I got possession."

"What do you mean?" inquired the girl ominously. "I understood you to say that you had given up playing poker because it was a waste of time and that you had so much to do that you had not time for such things."

"Sure! I did tell you that I had passed up poker and the like, and that is the truth. This coat was won about four years ago. And take it from me, it is some coat. I couldn't get a coat like that now for any kind of money. It's a real coat. It has goods in it and linings and pockets and a collar and all the attachments!"

"I envy you!" sighed the girl. "I wish I had the suit I had four years ago!"

"You bet," said the young man, changing his cigars from his right hand vest pocket to his left. "You'd be lucky if you had that 1914 model with the double embossed sleeves cut on the bias, with a cute switchback edging and the wide bell folds that gave it such a chick and pleasing effect!"

* * *

Jean's Ailment.

JEAN, small daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Santisteban, of Columbus, was playing in a room where her mother was busy and grew very inquisitive. So troublesome did her questions become that finally her mother said:

"Run away and play, Jean, I'm busy as I can be and sick in the bargain."

She went away for a few minutes. Then she entered the room again, looking very woebegone and holding her head in both hands.

"Why, what is the matter, Jean?" a sked Mrs. Santisteban.

"I'm sick," replied the tot.

"Where do you feel sick?" asked the mother in alarm.

"Why, I guess I'm sick in the bargain," answered Jean.

CLASSIFIED WANT ADS

Information—The rate for one insertion in The Saturday Blade and one insertion in the Chicago Ledger is 35 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next.

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500-514 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

SALESMEN WANTED

WATER STILLS MADE ENTIRELY OF copper, one or three gallon capacity; prices $25.00 and $40.00, respectively. Shipped prepaid by express or parcel post the same day we receive your order. Ideal for distilling water for automobile batteries, industrial uses, and drinking purposes. Charles Jarl, 1710 Leavenworth St., Omaha, Nebr.

SALESMEN—CITY OR TRAVELING. Experience unnecessary. Send for list of lines and full particulars. Prepare in spare time to earn the big salaries—$2,500 to $10,000 a year. Employment services rendered members. National Salesmen's Training Association, Dept. 103H, Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS WANTED

TAILORING AGENTS WANTED IN EVERY county to take orders for tailor-made-clothes. This is strictly an agency offer to men who can sell ten or more suits a season. We will ship you free of charge our large attractive fall and winter sample outfit, containing 200 samples and fashions. We can use foremen salesmen, press shops and barbers. Write today and become our exclusive agent in your territory. Jay Rose & Co., 411-415 S. Wells St., Chicago.

AGENTS, TAILOR MADE SUITS, WILD with excitement! Everybody eager to buy our artistic suits of value, (100) beautiful styles fall and winter; simply show these in spare time; the samples speak for themselves. Wake right up, no time to argue. Send this very minute for free sample outfit, only to responsible men, such as clerks, salesmen, cleaning stores and tailors. Eudell Tailors, 40 N. Wells St., Chicago, Ill.

MAKE $10,000.00 TO $25,000.00 YEARLY. Organize and manage Tire Club for well known high grade tire. New, original plan eliminates competition and insures 100% re-orders. We back you with nation wide intensive advertising campaign. Exclusive territory. Apply at once. Franklin Tire & Rubber Company, Department 180, Chicago, Illinois.

AGENTS—$100 WEEKLY. AUTOMOBILE owners everywhere wild with enthusiasm. Marvelous invention doubles power, mileage, efficiency. Saves its cost first day. Sensational sales everywhere. Territory going like wildfire. $26 sample outfit and Ford car free. Write quick. Ovee Co., Dept. 7, Louisville, Ky.

SELL WHAT MILLIONS WANT. NEW, wonderful Liberty portraits—Creates tremendous interest—Absolutely different—Unique. Enormous demand—30 hours' service. Liberal credit. Outfit and catalogue free. $100 weekly profit easy. Consolidated Portrait Co., Dept. 12, 1036 W. Adams St., Chicago.

PORTRAITS, MEDALLIONS, PHOTO PIL- low tops, luminous crucifix, photo plates, frames, sheet pictures, papier mache frames, etc. Lowest prices, rejects credited; prompt shipments; 30 days' credit; catalog and samples free. Jas. C. Bailey, Desk G-2, Chicago.

AGENTS! QUICK SALES! BIG PROFITS! Orders in every home for our beautiful dress goods, silks and general yard goods. Large book of samples free to agents. Write today for particulars. National Importing & Mfg. Co., Dept. P 2, 425 Broadway, New York.

AGENTS: $60 A WEEK TAKING ORDERS for guaranteed shoes for men, women and children. Must give satisfaction or replaced free. Brand new proposition. Write quick for territory and samples. Thomas Shoe Co., 3611 North St., Dayton, Ohio.

TIRE AGENTS. EXCLUSIVE REPRESEN- tatives to use and sell the new Mellinger Extra-Ply Tires. (No seconds.) Guarantee bond 8000 miles. Wholesale prices. Sample sections furnished. Mellinger Tire Co., 972 Oak, Kansas City, Missouri.

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS, FURNISH- ing everything; men and women, $30.00 to $100.00 weekly operating our "New System Specialty Candy Factories" anywhere. Opportunity lifetime; booklet free. Z. Ragsdale Co., East Orange, N. J.

THE PROSPEROUS AGENT IS A DAVIS agent. Line up for the big rush—$40-$60 weekly. "Lucky 11" and our 27 other varities cut store price one-third-one-half. Worth 150% to 200% for you. Davis Products Co., Dept. 609, Chicago.

BIG MONEY AND FAST SALES. EVERY owner buys gold initials for his auto. You charge $1.50; make $1.35. Ten orders a day. Write for particulars and free samples. American Monogram Co., Dept. 104, Glen Ridge, N. J.

AGENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES WANT- ed in your State to handle sales for the biggest selling auto specialty in America. Wonderful repeater. Write today. Eastern Auto Specialty Co., Dept. M, Utica, N. Y.

MAKE AND SELL YOUR OWN GOODS. Formulas by expert chemists. Manufacturing processes and trade secrets. Write for formula catalog. Wayne Mystic Company, Washington, D. C.

ENORMOUS PROFITS SELLING TO COL- ored people. No capital needed. We trust you. Write for our attractive proposition. Sent free. Tono Scalpa Co., Inc., Richmond, Va.

AGENTS—OUR SOAP AND TOILET AR- ticle plan is a wonder. Get our free sample case offer. Ho-Ro-Co., 125 Locust, St. Louis.

AGENTS WANTED—(Continued)

BIG PROFITS SELLING JUBILEE SPARK Intensifiers to auto owners, garages. Banishes spark plug trouble. Saves gas. Exclusive territory. Jubilee Mfg. Co., 220 Sta. C, Omaha, Nebr.

SELL INSYDE TYRES, GENUINE INNER armor for auto tires; double mileage; prevents punctures and blowouts; tremendous demand. American Accessories Company, Dept. 126, Cincinnati, Ohio.

AGENTS—LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS agents to sell hosiery, underwear, shirts, dresses, skirts, waists, shoes, clothing, etc. Write for free samples. Madison Mills, 503 Broadway, New York.

AGENTS — I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff; 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. Lacassian Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS: MASON SOLD 18 SPRAYERS AND Autowashers one Saturday; profits $2.50 each; square deal. Particulars free. Rusler Company, Johnstown, Ohio.

AGENTS WANTED FOR ELGIN, WALTHAM watches, jewelry and punch boards. Catalog free. Cutaway Importing Co., 9 Eldridge St., New York.

SELL GLOSSINE HAIR STRAIGHTENER to colored people. Marvelous seller. Sample 25c. Particulars free. American Supply House, 21 Pike, Covington, Ky.

WE START YOU WITHOUT A DOLLAR— Soaps, extracts, perfumes, toilet goods. Experience unnecessary. Carnation Co., 126 Olive, St. Louis.

AGENTS, KOMIK WINDOW CARDS JUST out, selling fast, big profits, write quick. Komik Advertising Co., 112 South 8th St., Cambridge, Ohio.

CREVICE AND CRACK FILLER FORMULA, $1.00, starts your business. Dept. 58, Martinek, 405 Lexington Avenue, New York.

HELP WANTED

WORK AND WIN FOR YOURSELF. MEN and women making $25 to $150 a week. Any locality every week. No agency proposition. No capital needed. Address Wentt Mail Order Service, 3214 Normal Ave., Chicago.

YOUR GOVERNMENT WANTS HUNDREDS railway mail clerks—men—women over 17, $1,600-$2,300 year. List positions open—free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. A 29, Rochester, N. Y.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

DETECTIVES EARN BIG MONEY. TRAVEL. Great demand. We train you. Particulars free. Write American Detective System, 1968 Broadway, New York.

MALE HELP WANTED

RAILWAY TRAFFIC INSPECTORS EARN from $110 to $200 per month and expenses. Travel if desired. Unlimited advancement. No age limit. We train you. Positions furnished under guarantee. Write for booklet CM-12, Standard Business Training Institute, Buffalo, N. Y.

MEN—AGE 17 TO 45. EXPERIENCE UN- necessary. Travel; make secret investigations, report. Salaries; expenses. American-Foreign Detective Agency, 126, St. Louis.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, $140-$200, colored porters by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 686 Ry. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ills.

BE A DETECTIVE $50-$100 WEEKLY; travel over world; experience unnecessary. American Detective Agency, 300 Lucas, St. Louis.

MEN—BOYS, BECOME MOTOR EXPERTS. $45 week. Learn while earning. Write Franklin Institute, Dept. A 804, Rochester, N. Y.

BE A DETECTIVE. EXCELLENT OPPOR- tunity, good pay, travel. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

WOMEN TO SEW. GOODS SENT PRE- paid to your door; plain sewing; steady work; no canvassing. Send stamped envelope for prices paid. Universal Co., Dept. 54, Philadelphia, Pa.

WOMEN—GIRLS—BECOME DRESS-GOWN designers. $150 month. Sample lessons free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. A 854, Rochester, N. Y.

MEDICAL

TO SUFFERING MEN AND WOMEN. IF you have lame back, failing memory, loss of ambition, despondency, unfitting you for the ordinary duties of life; or if afflicted with any chronic nervous, kidney or bladder disease. Remember; we are specialists in these diseases. Write; book symptom blank and advice free. Dr. Meyers, 316 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

DON'T INVEST IN OIL UNTIL YOU READ The Texas Investor, Weekly Magazine. Gives concise, reliable, up-to-date information and facts about most wonderful developments and fortune-making in history of Texas oil, and explains one particular opportunity in which investors should reap tremendous returns; published by practical oil operator and tells how and where to invest for greatest safety and quick results. Write for free trial subscription. C. C. Cannan, Publisher, 739 Scanlan Bldg., Houston, Texas.

DON'T INVEST IN OIL UNTIL YOU GET your free copy of our large size, three color Texas Oil Pool Chart—just off the press. Gives complete information concerning your chances to make a big winning in Texas oil. Also explains "35,000 Acres of Opportunity" which you will find valuable, as well as interesting. Write today for the Chart—it will be sent you without cost. Texas Security Syndicate, 1168 Story Bldg., Los Angeles, Calif.

$5,000 YEARLY INCOME PAID THOU- sands of people who invested in Texas oil lands. They made the start. $2 may start you making $200 monthly, possibly more. You get warranty deed to land with interest in well, and participating interest in entire subdivision. Results count. Bank reference, established facts free. Write today. Souriake Texas Oil Co., 205 DeMenil, St. Louis, Mo.

MILLION DOLLARS MADE OVER NIGHT in oil acreage. Small spot has done it. Few acres left, well located between four good producing oil fields. $200 acre. Ten per cent down, balance monthly. One acre may complete your independence for life. Free information. Bank reference. Address Texas Oil Acre Co., 812-A. Kentucky St., Dallas, Texas.

ONLY KNOWN MAP SHOWING ALL proven Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Louisiana oil fields, and other valuable information free. Don't invest before seeing it. R. V. Wilson, Mngr. Texas Traffic Ass'n, 10 Hoffman Bldg., Houston, Texas.

$2.00 MONTHLY BUYS DEED TO LAND and interest in oil wells that should pay $100 for each $2.00 invested. Write for particulars. Texas Gulf Company, 633 First Nat'l Bank, Houston, Texas.

AS SAFE AS A BANK. 300% ANNUALLY. If you can invest fifteen dollars upwards, write. Midwest Investment Bureau, Boston Block, Minneapolis, Minn.

FREE 3 MONTHS TO GET ACQUAINTED. The Western Miner, 2545 W. 37th Avenue, Denver, Colo.

MALE AND FEMALE HELP WANTED

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